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ORPHEUS TODAY

1 SAINT FRANCIS OF THE TREES

AND OTHER VERSE

BY

WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE

THE WESTERN LITERARY PRESS

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*"To the Muse . . .
her own"*

"And yet, the best is never seen,—or said"

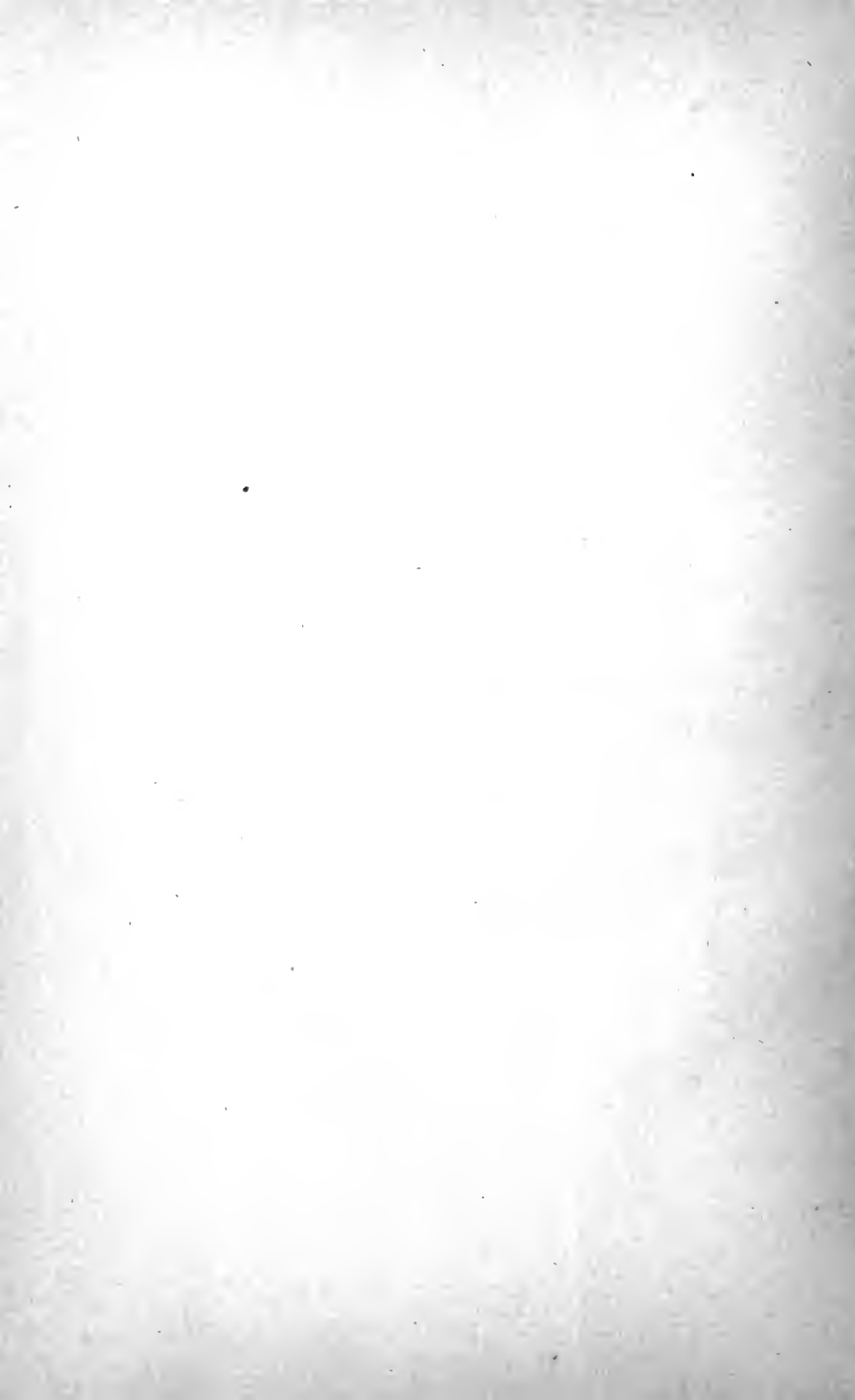


TABLE OF CONTENTS

ORPHEUS TODAY

	Page		Page
Orpheus Today	11	6. Apparition and Exorcism	35
The Soul's Wizardries.....	17	7. The Bride Awake.....	36
Day Dreams	19	The Hawk:	
To a Latterday Prophet.....	21	1. Sunrise Prelude.....	37
Ode in Sapphics.....	25	2. The Pigeon.....	37
Don Juan	26	3. The Lark.....	37
Identity	26	4. The Hawk.....	38
One Sleep	28	5. The Pæan.....	38
The Echoes:		6. The Voiceless Triumph..	39
1. The Dream Bird.....	28	Higher Mathematics.....	39
2. Early Spring.....	29	Wishes	39
3. The Mate.....	30	A Father's Memory.....	40
4. The Death-Song.....	31	Selfish Grief.....	41
Dream and Waking:		Adrift	41
Sunset Prelude.....	32	The Twin Poplar.....	42
1. An Old Nest.....	32	Parental Consent.....	45
2. A Mocking-Bird.....	33	The Widower.....	47
3. The Old Ideal.....	33	The Beeches of Fern Bank:	
4. The Bride Asleep.....	34	1. Fellowship	47
5. Evocation.....	34	2. Farewell	48

THE DEWDROPS

(A Phantasy in Two Tableaux and Thirteen Scenes)

Synopsis	52
Tableau I. The Death of the Dewdrops:	
1. The Enchantment.....	53
2. The Moon	54
3. The Fireflies.....	56
4. The Spider.....	57
5. The Trees.....	60
6. The Wind of Death....	62
7. The Droplets.....	64
Tableau II. The Doom of the Dew:	
8. The Moon Set.....	66
9. The Treetoad.....	68
10. The Dawn.....	71
11. The Ruby-Throat.....	73
12. The Requiem.....	76
13. The Fairy Queen's Afterword	77

SEWANEE LYRICS, AND KINDRED VERSE

<p>The Rejected Lover to the Moon 79</p> <p>"Hashish":</p> <p> 1. The Choice..... 80</p> <p> 2. The Trance..... 80</p> <p> 3. The Waking 82</p> <p>A February Day in Tennessee 83</p> <p>A Respite 84</p> <p>In Vain..... 85</p> <p>Cherry Bloom..... 86</p> <p>Nox Mystica..... 87</p> <p>The Soul's Sanctuary..... 88</p> <p>Under the Stars..... 89</p> <p>Love in Heaven..... 91</p> <p>Song and Countersong:</p> <p> 1. Song 92</p> <p> 2. Countersong 92</p> <p>Sympathetic Music..... 93</p> <p>Dirge 94</p> <p>Called from the Sheep-Cotes. 95</p> <p>Palmstry 95</p> <p>Nocturne 96</p>	<p>Twin Dewdrops..... 96</p> <p>Frost-Work 97</p> <p>After Tears..... 98</p> <p>A Sewanee Idyl..... 99</p> <p>Repartee in the Park..... 100</p> <p>Five Songs from "Sigurd":</p> <p> 1. Sigurd's Pledge..... 101</p> <p> 2. Grunhild's Enchantment of Sigurd..... 101</p> <p> 3. The Spell Song..... 102</p> <p> 4. The Baldur Dirge..... 103</p> <p> 5. Gudrun's Blood-Wite.... 103</p> <p>A Rime of the Wicked Birds in June..... 104</p> <p>Molly, May, and Dolly up the Glen 109</p> <p>High in the Colorado Rockies:</p> <p> 1. The Mountain Park..... 118</p> <p> 2. The Cabin..... 118</p> <p> 3. Scherzo 123</p> <p> 4. By the Brook..... 124</p> <p> 5. The Curtain Falls..... 125</p> <p> 6. "So Long"..... 126</p> <p>Impromptu 126</p>
--	---

THE BOOK OF SYMBOLIC ODES

<p>Foreword 127</p> <p> (Ethical Apology)</p> <p>The Lion..... 128</p> <p> (Individuality)</p> <p>The Old Hemlock..... 132</p> <p> (The Self and Afterlife)</p> <p>The Rime of the Tarn..... 136</p> <p> (Cheer of Soul)</p> <p>The Defiled Mountain Torrent 147</p> <p> (Indignation Overcome)</p> <p>The Mule..... 159</p> <p> (The Social Hope)</p>	<p>Mt. Peleé in Eruption..... 161</p> <p> (Despair Divine)</p> <p>Pike's Peak:</p> <p> (Man and the Universe)</p> <p> 1. The Mountain..... 165</p> <p> 2. The Meaning..... 169</p> <p> 3. The Man..... 174</p> <p>The Beech in Winter..... 179</p> <p> (The Soul and God)</p> <p>Afterword 185</p> <p> (Esthetic Apology)</p>
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LIFE AND LOVE

PART I. LOVE'S DAWN

<p>I. Love and Friendship:</p> <p>1. Love, the Self-Revelator 187</p> <p>2. Divine Discontent..... 188</p> <p>3. Love's Altruism..... 188</p> <p>4. Love, the Friend..... 189</p> <p>5. Sundered Friends..... 189</p> <p>II. Love's Prelude:</p> <p>1. Wolfenbüttel 190</p> <p>2. Young Icarus..... 190</p> <p>3. As in Picturebookland.. 191</p> <p>4. The First Funeral..... 191</p> <p>5. Roadside Theophany.... 192</p> <p>6. Mystic Kinship..... 192</p> <p>7. Toward Fiesole..... 193</p> <p>8. San Giovanni..... 193</p> <p>9. Growing Apart..... 194</p> <p>10. Bocca d' Arno..... 194</p> <p>11. First Manhood..... 195</p> <p>12. Primeval Man..... 195</p> <p>13. Parental Jealousy..... 196</p> <p>14. The Soul's Eden..... 196</p> <p>15. Flower-Talismans 197</p> <p>16. Altenbaumburg (The Lilies) 197</p> <p>17. Altenbaumburg (The Comforter) 198</p> <p>18. Foretaste and Aftertaste 198</p> <p>19. Münster am Stein..... 199</p> <p>20. Prophet or Poet?..... 199</p> <p>21. A Hadley Holiday..... 200</p> <p>22. Fever Hallucination.... 200</p>	<p>23. The Peak of Vision..... 201</p> <p>24. Convalescence 201</p> <p>25. Again the Trojan Boy.. 202</p> <p>26. First Disillusion..... 202</p> <p>27. Materialism 203</p> <p>28. The Saving Faith..... 203</p> <p>29. Near and Far..... 204</p> <p>30. Far and Near..... 204</p> <p>31. Luminous Hours..... 205</p> <p>32. The Liveoaks in March. 205</p> <p>33. Unearned Returns..... 206</p> <p>34. The Parable of the Dew 206</p> <p>35. The Judgment..... 207</p> <p>36. Evidence of Sanity.... 207</p> <p>37. Not Yet 208</p> <p>38. Presence 208</p> <p>38a. No Cross, No Crown.. 209</p> <p>39. Autumn Sadness 209</p> <p>40. True Youth..... 210</p> <p>41. Sweet Maiden Constancy 210</p> <p>42. Innocence Human..... 211</p> <p>43. Innocence Divine..... 211</p> <p>44. First Sight..... 212</p> <p>45. Heart's Perversity..... 212</p> <p>III. The Passing of Eros and Aphrodite:</p> <p>46. Love's Sorrow-Trance.. 213</p> <p>47. Love's Awakening..... 213</p> <p>48. Love's Soothsay of Doom 214</p> <p>49. The Tidal Wave..... 214</p> <p>50. Casting the Horoscope. 215</p>
--	---

PART II. LOVE'S SUNRISE

<p>The Wooing o' It:</p> <p>1. Speechless Proposal.... 216</p> <p>2. Love's Humility..... 217</p> <p>3. Paradise Gained..... 217</p> <p>4. Paradise Lost..... 218</p> <p>5. Sudden Spring..... 218</p> <p>6. Orchard Optimism..... 219</p> <p>7. Love's Compass..... 219</p> <p>8. Body's Absence..... 220</p> <p>9. Fancy or Fact..... 220</p>	<p>10. Individual Insufficiency... 221</p> <p>11. Mutual Sufficiency..... 221</p> <p>12. Perspectives 222</p> <p>13. Wild-Goose Creek..... 222</p> <p>14. Knowledge of God..... 223</p> <p>15. True Love..... 223</p> <p>16. Self-Surrender 224</p> <p>17. Unshed Tears..... 224</p> <p>18. Love's Immortality..... 225</p> <p>19. Environment 225</p>
---	--

20. Bridal Dream	226	23. Love's Harmony.....	227
21. The Mother.....	226	24. Incarnation	228
22. Love's Melody.....	227	25. Love's Silence.....	228

A VISION OF NEW HELLAS

To the Muse.....	229	The Transfiguration.....	254
The Foresong.....	230	Hymn to Aphrodite.....	258
A Song of Songs:		The Reconciliation.....	262
Demeter Appeareth.....	233	The Hymn to Apollo.....	265
Dionysos Cometh.....	239	Rival's Divine.....	270
Hymn to Dionysos, the Ele-		Votive Gifts.....	273
mental	243	Hymns Hymeneal.....	275
The Colloquy	246	Interlude	279
Hymn to Dionysos, the Hero-		The Banquet of the Gods...	280
God	248	The Aftersong.....	284

TRANSLATIONS FROM LEOPARDI AND GOETHE

La Ginestra (Leopardi).....	289
Odes and Didactic Verse (Goethe):	
Nature and Art (Natur und Kunst).....	297
Balance (from the Metamorphose der Thiere).....	298
A Human Feeling (Menschengefühl).....	298
Even So (Ein Gleiches).....	299
The Wayfarer (Der Wanderer).....	299
Chant of the Spirits over the Waters (Gesang der Geister ueber den Wassern)	304
Human Limitations (Die Grenzen der Menschheit).....	305
The Divine (Das Göttliche).....	307
My Goddess (Meine Göttin).....	309
The One and the All (Eins und Alle).....	311
My Legacy (Vermächtniss)	312
Oracular Words in Orphic Manner (Urworte, Orphisch).....	313

ST. FRANCIS OF THE TREES	317
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ORPHEUS TODAY

SOME PRINT ERRORS.

Page 45, line 26, for *sunder* read *asunder*.

" 135, " 37, for *float* read *afloat*.

" 149, " 35, for *throng motley* read *motley throng*.

" 153, " 8, for *Thou even*, read *Thou, even*.

" 187, " 11, for *of disaccord; and Thou* read *of discord;
and, Thou*.

" 188, " 1, for *For, comest* read *For, camest*.

" 194, " 7, for *will be* read *will he*.

" 205, " 19, omit comma.

" 213, " 26, insert *of* before *fury*.

" 253, " 15, for *Silenos's* read *Silenos'*.

" 266, " 31, for *Zeus's* read *Zeus'*.

" 313, " 19, for *leant* read *lent*.

ORPHEUS TODAY

I.

O Orpheus, help! Too long,
 alas, hast thou been hence.
Come, O come, and forthwith,
 irradiant child-like myth
 of the Golden Age,
 with the hallow'd influence
 over spirit and sense
 of oracular Song!
Thee every generation
 hath closer drawn to the needs
 of the soul; Who canst assuage
 Man's grief at the world-old ill,—
 and the inhuman curse
 of reasonless wont, and distrust
 of self—with the gleeful lay of deeds
 heroic, that comfort and thrill;
 Who, with glad-eyed vaticination
 of faith, the strange evils our hearts presage
 canst dissipate, and disperse.
Return, return unto us
 with lyre immortal, and voice clear-ringing
 of life-love and praise,
 hymning all gods of the light; and cast
 the spell victorious
 of thy mystical singing
 at last
 over these latter days.

II.

Hither
 from fields Elysian
 where droop and wither

no blossoms of fancy or gladsome whim,
 where doubt and sorrow no eyes bedim,—
 hasten, Helper, and Freer
 with the gaze of the Seer—
 that deep interior vision,
 wotting the heart-sure manifold
 Truth of all things that be:—
 How thick we do press and crowd
 (wedged elbow in elbow, and knee against knee,)
 a tangle rank, clamped, twisted, and braced,
 humped, crooked, and bowed!
 How, greedily thrust, do our tap-roots pierce
 to the core of the parcht stone-waste!
 How our branches stretch greedily fierce
 in a jealous horror enlaced,—
 fellow with fellow agrapple for the throttling hold
 that shall snakewise each-other enfold!
 O Orpheus, haste, for we choke at length
 (galled and knotted and gnurled,
 belichened, dry-rotten,)
 our stature misshapen and sapped our strength—
 Hear, hear, as we pray and plead,
 (all piteous shame of our plight forgotten,)
 We men of a dying world,—
 O Orpheus, Orpheus—hear us, and heed!

III.

For lo, thro' yon thickets dense,
 impassable to the children of Zeus,
 where never glad ray of the holy Sun,
 thy Father assaileth the shadows dim,
 or winds of heaven forth-drive
 from fetid haunts of monstrous use,
 pollution and pestilence;
 What Beasts of the midnight foul,
 only with thirst of blood alive,
 stalk after their prey and prowl,—
 ghostlike efface them,—roar and howl,
 or crouch asnarl and askulk—

or cower for the sudden death-spring
with claws and fangs and the down-crashing bulk!
O Orpheus, who hearest our cry
 behold with thy sunny eye
 the dens obscene where lair and whelp
 these devils of lust, in the womb
 of the shuddering gloom.
Deliverance and comfort bring,
 Orpheus, O Orpheus, help.

IV.

Heard hath the Singer
 as in the olden time,
 yea, in the golden time,
 our joyous Wisdom-bringer;
and fulfilled is already the earth
 with subtle far echoings
 of the spirit-song jocund He sings.
And everywhere lo, how men
 go forth as gods, with hearts
 of gods in their bosoms, and laughter
 of gods again
 in their eyes,—
 sane, happy and wise!
For gone of whatever departs
 is the baneful regret;
 the sickly hope of a bliss hereafter
 that crieth forever: "Not yet";
 of futile things, which cumber and irk,
 the anguish vain and the fret;
 free of the mire, of the mirk,
 of the reek, that hinder and let;
Above the Olympian outlook wide—
 sea, scarp, and hill and vale;
 above the Caucasus icy-vast
 of tortured Prometheän pride.
For lo,
 in the spirit they come and they go,
 in the selfsame spirit of thy Song:—

No nigh, no far,—no future, no past—
no foul, no fair—no right, no wrong—
for such as they! All hail!

V.

Singer divine,
First-born of the Muse, thou knewest our sorrow,—
or whence could it poignancy borrow
that Song immortal of thine?
Ah, She who the meaning showed
of life beyond greed, beyond lust;
in whose mystical eyes the prophecy glowed,
of the holier rebirth
forever of thee and of her, to a worth
thou knewest in Her not, or thee:—
(the thing ye would
in the thing ye must—
in the evil, the good—
and the soul, in the dust;)
Who translated brutish content
to human unrest; to delight
in the fiat creative; to beauty, and heavenly right;—
Eurydice, Eurydice, She
Mother of the spirit in thee, and Child
likewise of thy singing—She went
(her treasures of love unspent,)
to Hades unreconciled.
Yea, She bade thee the last farewell
of the death-cold hand
and stark—
of dumb lips and sightless lids that tell
the uttermost word, unutterable
speech of our longing. But Thou didst withstand
undaunted the King of terrors dark.
And manful, and godlike, to lovely life
sangest her back from care and cark—
beloved Mother and Child and Wife.
Then, haste alas, overeager as man to possess
what singer alone and seer can bless

the earth with, and sun,—did lose thee at last
(one minute more thou hadst held Her fast!)
the comforting human tones,
and the rapture-giving touch,
for which the bereaved heart groans—
so little, yet ah, so much, so much!
Wherefore, O thou
Orpheus who knowest our woe,
the peace of Elysium forego.
On us have pity, even now,
and thy pity deign to show.
Son of Apollo, help!

VI.

For again is Eurydice dead,
the most dear, and fair, and good;
and our spirit to hers was wed,
the holy vows were said,
Yea, the child of her maidenhood
Godbegotten, she bare unborn, in her heart!
With what spell of prayer—Ah, what art
magical, chaunt or dance
compulsive, shall death be withstood
of Us children of chance,
bewildered and faint for despair?
Have pity, have pity!
Our spirit disbelieveth. O spare,
spare us the bitter self-scorn
that assaulteth us here forlorn.
Have pity, have pity!
To the eyes Her love did illumine,
to the heart that vainly yearneth,
the lust of the brute prehuman
returneth, returneth.
Have pity, have pity, have pity!
The greed of the jungle doth grip
the soil below the man
in craft and wont; and our fellowship
is: "Slay to live, who can!"

Have pity, have pity!
The heart of the desert noon
is upon us, from tree-top to root;
our manhood doth perish;—we swoon
to the cringe and the leer of the brute.
Have pity, have pity, have pity!
O Orpheus, Son of Apollo, help!

VII.

Singer, gentle, the Bacchants of yore
did shout and yell and blaspheme.
They fell upon thee and rent and tore,
and, bleeding, cast thee down the fated stream.
But thy blood was lost not; it ran
into the veins of Man,
and thy flesh is our flesh evermore!
Arise, oh, arise from the dead,
and take that is thine for thine own:
our blood thy blood, who hast bled;
our flesh thy flesh alone.
Come and possess us, possess us;
and the youth we have lost, alack,
the hope, the love, the dream—to bless us—
sing us Eurydice back!
Yea, yea—
and the Forest of twofold greed
doth awake; and the boughs of us tremble
and sway,—
and our ancient trunks straighten them, lithe
once more and freed,—
to the wind of thy melody brave.
Footloose we move in a ring
to thy jubilant rhythm, and blithe
leap we, and bow, and wave,
and whirl us unwearying.
And the Beasts of the loathly night
do stand up manful, at last, full height;
and their evil glare about
of innumerable eyes, to a shine

superhuman blend:
the Eternal encircling the True
without a beginning or end.
Ha, hearken, we raise the shout:—
“We are wholly, O Orpheus, thine!
Thou, Thou hast sung us footloose
from vile crafts and necessities base;
talons to hands for sacred use,
and snout deformed to the Kingly face.
O Orpheus, gracious myth divine,
now even now
up the mountain’s gradual slopes
Thou hast sung us free, and gentle, and pure;
Thou hast sung us to natural faiths and hopes;
Thou hast sung us to godly loves secure;
Thou hast done it, Thou alone, Thou!
Thou hast sung us back the lost ideal,
Thou hast sung Eurydice back to life,
Thou hast sung the mystical hymeneal
of maiden Mother and Child and Wife.
Hearken our vow,
O Orpheus, Singer
and Seer,
Cheer-bringer,
and Freer,
We are thine, we are thine forever now!”

THE SOUL’S WIZARDRIES

Natural magic!
Lo, ooze and slime of the marsh
sunsmit to glory?
So, likewise the slayer’s cell
(in a world hopeless and harsh
what miracle!)
lifted by mystic blisses
of penance far above abysses
of lurid hell,

a cloud-pure promontory—
the mighty hand and the outstretchèd arm!
So, the harlot's bed, and lewd love-token
(Mark how it wins—the spell,
the serene charm
faithfully spoken!)
thro' a divine devotion
hallowing death,
become—(who shall believe it?)
white moonrise over sleeping ocean,—
or, if thou canst conceive it:—
a close-veiled holy of holies,
whereat the haloed saint his orison saith
awe-humbled, under breath.

Magic, white magic!
Our brutish strife and crime
offering this gross-gorged time
soul's bread of anguish tragic,
for spirit to taste
gracious and chaste!
Shames now, and doltish follies;—thereafter
transmuted to a bubbling draught of laughter!
The craven fears
ignoble of man,
waxen, at touch of Pan,
terrific; the craft of the thrall and malice
throneth aloft sublime
a hate Satanic.
The hideous doth upbulk to a threat Titanic,
and the loathly dwarfeth to the grim
grotesque and odd;—
distilled, as fire-drop in the reeking chalice
that changeth to opaline wine the blood,
till the eyes of love with marvel dim,
for heavenly gladness swim!

Ha, ever the wraith
of the bygone faith
haunteth the mart

of the commonplace.
O child, then, of the highest God,
take heart, take heart
of grace.
Thou too wert begotten and born
Olympian. Lift thine head.
Nevermore weak, forlorn,
down-drooping to the dead,
earth's outcast, shalt thou pant!
For, presently Jove nods
assent to thine unbreathed petition.
Thine the omnipotent fiat of gods,
and all thy dross already gold, pure gold!

See, see!

(What holy gladness,—
wisdom, not madness!)
Thou too mayest be
high hierophant
divine magician!

DAY DREAMS

A forest there is. Dreams are its trees
where branches lock with leafage dense,
to screen in gloom trunks grey or dusk,
and a lavish floor of green intense.
And over the roof that shelters these
quick sunbeams foot a reckless reel,
stamping in golden glee, to crack
their floor if possible, and feel
the cool of the green gloom under (see!)
in which swim birds of curious hues
(as in some river fishes dart)
but entrance ever the leaves refuse.
A forest of dreams, all dreamed by me,
familiar, strange, and dear, most dear,
with wonders old I know by heart
and wonders new too fair to fear!

Oft do I wander through its shades
alone, or hand in hand with One
whose name I never sought to know,
because I fancy she hath none.
Look! how the forest knee-high wades
in hope's fresh sea of shrubbery!
She, laughing ever, as we go—
her laughter's notes mount merrily
their sprightly scale, till from each tree
some bird-voice whirls the laughter higher!
Then throbs the forest: peal on peal
of thunder miscal. How tire
of such a senseless jubilee?

For every tree-top hides a nest
by two wed wishes built, to seal
with a new better love their best.
Wild wishes build them nests, I say,
in boughs of my dream-trees, and burst—
whenever she (my nameless One)
chances to laugh, in song. Well-versed
in all the tricks a syren may
practice, bewildering whoso hears,
my Witch (whom never saw the sun,
born of the dim cool) slyly peers
with eyes (their color can I tell,
that dartle all?) into each thick
of undergrowth for certain flowers,
which, finding, she stoops her down to pick.
Then falls upon her from the air
a frolic band of sunbeams sly—
her hair—sent by the merry sun
forbidden forest-shades to spy!
Why doth she pick them, do you ask?

For me, of course. All which I take
back with me to the world without,
when for a brief space I forsake
my forest of dreams;—and we, we both,
She and I, we wonder why they bloom—
those flowers like her own lips' sweet pout—
if to be plucked their hapless doom!

O forest dear! O forest old—
my own, none other's! O dear trees
that are not trees,—dear songster birds
that are not birds,—O sweetest, these
flowers, not flowers—but joys foretold
plucked by that One who hath no name,—
let me be silent, lest my words
give you perchance a fatal fame;
lest greedy men, who hear my tale,
with brutal axe fare forth by stealth
and fell my forest, trunk by trunk—
timber to get them vulgar wealth!
Mad call they me? Dear Soul, all hail
their mocks and sneers at our romance
for so our treasure is safely sunk
in the river of men's ignorance!

TO A LATTERDAY PROPHET

(WHO CAME LATE, AND WENT FORTH TOO SOON)

He came to us with soul on fire,
he came to us from the East with light:
we heard, we saw; and God drew nigher,
and wrong was wrong, and right was right.

He went forth from among us then.
All soon would be as ere he came;
for men, we murmured, are but men,
and the world's ways for aye the same!

Ah, who that clomb the heights serene
in sleep, can after quite forego
the vision? gainsay, that once hath seen,
its glory; and the known unknow?

For His sake life hath holier worth,
our faith made sure—whate'er we are—
that still our man-corrupted Earth
shines in God's firmament—a star!

OUR MOTHER OF LIFE

What other heaven than this should heart desire
in azure nudity, or cloudy flow
defining godlike dreams invisible else?
What other star than ours, of shiny seas,
of continents in waves of green spring-clad,
with chains of diamond ice-peaks loosely decked
gathered to flashing heaps at either pole?
While here we lie, Love, under laughing trees,
can we not feel the sway of happy earth
as on she flies enhaloed of her day,
and followed by her train of soft-starred night?

O foolish perverts from the natural faith,
insane, awake! Ye deemed it wise to sow
in fields of mist, sun-golden at the dawn,
the seeds of hope? Ye wailed when ye beheld
only at sunset on the verge of night
wave a far crop of faiths illusively
which death might harvest, but no living man?
So in your bitterness of heart ye cried:
"Blessed are they that live not, for they reap
with death wide fields of bliss"? Arise!
arise, ye perverts, if ye have ears to hear.
Wait for no general resurrection. Throng
from self-dug graves of sorrow, and behold
The symbol: Life a crowing Babe in arms
of tender Mother Death, whose proud fond eyes
remember and foresee—whose bosom swells
with rich provision for the hungry mouth!
A little sleep, and in the Babe we crow—
a little sleep, and in the Mother smile;
and between sleep and sleep—a lover's kiss!

What other life? What other love? What truth
truer than this—that Spring hath bloom and song?
And Summer holy heat, and flutter of wings?
And Autumn ripe fruit—heavy, luscious, red—

and flights through sky into the warm unknown?
And Winter white dreams of a whiter Spring?

Ah, they, that love as we, are never alone!
Even here, as smile lights smile for intimate joy
that we are denizens of this living earth,
behold, our Holy Mother immaculate
draweth near softly—smileth on us both.
Thou seest not her face? The shadow vague
of the glad trees about us—'tis the drift
of ample robes over the twinkling grass
for vital bliss ashiver—knowing her.
She walketh viewless through the shining day,
she seeketh them who seek her not—her breath
is on thy happy hair! Her large deep eyes
give thine a haze of rapture that they seem,
tho' fixed on me, to look, Love, far away
into the heart of heavenly delights!
Thou seest her now? That rapturous thrill of fear—
it is thy soul aware of her spread arms
fain to envelop us with yearning love.
We yearn not, for we have.

O Mother, soon,
soon shall we come to thee, who were of thee,
who bless thee filially, though now we strive
against thee, lest thou fold us to thy heart
ere yet we have done with play. But sweet it is
to know what breast shall pillow us in sleep
when tired at last.

See, see! Life's God is nigh,—
thy Son of laughter and heroic toils,
Him we acknowledge in thy holy stead,
not holier, but dearer unto us,
and dear to thee, thy very Son, thy self,
to whom thou gavest us, to be his own!
O thou wilt punish not who hold by him,
loyally his, not thine; with fervent soul
worshiping him, crying the jubilant cry

before his coming, dumb at thy approach—
for thou art he!

Look, Love, behold him come!
The locust trees are dancing in vast winds
of joy, dropping bloomsnows from clusters pure
over the frolic grass about us. There,
the lilac bushes catch the breeze, and leap,
wave with green arms their spires of blossoms pale
like maddened bacchants full of sunny wine,
shaking the cruel thyrsis for the God!
Birds burst together into reckless song
till the air throbs with obstinate wild notes
of ecstasy; the blue of heaven pours in
as the trees overhead lift high their boughs
and meet atop applauding frantically.
Close, close! The whole world thrills with the
coming kiss.

Not peace—war, war! Only the victors live
and bloom and sing!

The vanquished,—where are they?
Ah, from the Mother's eyes they beam their love,
on us the Victory of their battles lost,
Crest of their wave,—the spray, the flare of hues!

O kiss, Love, let us kiss and kiss again,
so shall the God of Life be visible
to eyes of rapturous faith—for he is Love.
And Mother Death that instant shall rejoice—
for she is Love, as he, her Son, is Love.

What Mother must not laugh when crows her Babe!

ODE IN SAPPHICS

(Sung at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Cincinnati Literary Club)

Sing the good Old Days that are gone forever,
rich in friendship, love; and for sturdy virtue,
honest purpose, faith, and heroic action,
sweet to remember.

Half a hundred years of success and failure:
earth and sky and sea are the same, and little
change the ways of men; the beholder only
ages and passes.

Wherefore mourn, sweet friends, or despond or marvel?
Still the New Days come—for the Maker liveth—
young and fresh and bold, and the cry is ever
upward and onward!

Past and future meet in the vital present;
thankfulness and trust in a pure emotion,
making wise the young, and the old courageous,
singing together:—

Sweet the good Old Days to recall and cherish;
sweet the good New Days to forecast and welcome;
sweet the tried, the known; and the fresh surprises
sweetly delightful!

Yea, for pain and grief to the brave and noble
yield a pure joy, yield a reward of virtue:
faith in life, death, God, and in man, our brother,
ever, forever!

DON JUAN

Ten hundred lives I live,
why then should this life chain me?
When scores of hearts men take and give,
wherefore should this heart pain me?

A myriad snaring eyes,
white breasts, rare maiden graces?
Things to be wooed and won! With lies?—
Nay, She all else effaces.

One still, tho' manifold?
True, true. Her heart I singled?
Love's sun rode high in skies of gold—
then, waves and clouds commingled.

Grope, press thro' the soul's thick gloom
to reach that fiend? Entangle
the traitor self? Make fast his doom?
Clutch, crunch, and grind and strangle?

God, who hath wronged her? I?
Slay thou that man, the doer!
Shall for the dead the living die?
Long dead is he—her wooer!

IDENTITY

O soul-mutation! When are we one thing?
Do you know, Love, even now, as I looked up
from this grim book of far-off times, you seemed
a stranger; and suddenly upon a stage
of half-real vision, I beheld this scene
enacted in the quiet of our home.

A man who bore strong likeness to myself
so that to me he seemed me, sat and read
intently; and near him leaned a lady, fair—
I cannot tell how fair and dear she seemed—

as you to me . . . and, verily she was you.
 She came to him, saying he was estranged,
 not loverlike. Angrily he looked up, . . .
 bewildered rather. "And, tell me who art thou?"
 he asked. "I know there has not been in me a change.
 I ever was as now I am." And you seemed smit
 with a fell fear of something undefined.
 A keen long look,—half scorn, half plea—you sent.
 Abashed at my harsh words (which yet seemed true)
 to one so beautiful, I added "Nay,
 I dreamed perhaps, fair lady, of a brow
 with dark hair circled so; but how could I
 to a dream-creature vow away the love
 of the waking man, the dreamer never knew?"
 And you at me looked steadily, nor winced.
 Then flashed a recognition.—"Am I mad?
 This, this I had forgotten! It was you?
 And I? You for long years I wooed, and won,
 and kissed, and wedded? God, was I gone mad?
 It was a veritable thing, no dream,—
 that beautiful love? Ah, how to seize the soul
 and fetter it fast in manacles of faith?
 For hearken, Dear, even now I thought myself
 alone, purposeless, heavenless,—and with you
 close at my side! I am myself again . . .
 sweet friend and sweeter Love, I am myself;
 I am the lover dreamed of these long years, . . .
 ay, anything lest I be all alone,
 and those dear eyes that are God's eyes to me,
 fill with tears angrily. My Sweet, my Love,
 O that a moment could have sundered so
 my spirit from thine, whose I must ever be!

.
 A whim of fancy was it? Yet, alas
 a parable of truth. I love thee now,
 yet, darling, what assurance can I give?
 I cannot swear. I, uttering the words,
 am other than the framer of their thought.
 I am another than thy yesterday's,
 must woo again another soul afresh. . . .

Yet love, Love, is the same (though we be changed)
the bond that binds these many into one.
O love—love! God, we cannot! Bind us fast,
Thou who alone art truly ever thou!

ONE SLEEP

Tho' now each dreams his dream alone
and the soul's beloved in hell may weep,
while the lover laughs in a heaven of his own;
there shall be (I have heard) at last—one sleep!

“Till death us do part?” Who never here
are one? Nay, rather, till death unite
beyond all separate hope and fear,
or both with dreamless torpor smite!

Twain have we been and still are twain
for all love's anguishful desire!
Ah, welcome ages of infinite pain
if thence we leap,—one flame of fire!

For the mystery whispereth in my heart
from holiest height, from lowliest deep:—
“Heaven is—where thou forever art;
one vision—awake . . . and one dream—asleep!”

THE ECHOES

I.

THE DREAM BIRD

In a dream, last night, I saw my heart
from a leafless brier as a Bird upstart
to fling him eagerly aloft,
o'er rain-wet garth and steaming croft,
o'er grim stone-fence and blackthorn hedge,—
unlured of the free horizon-edge,—

up, up from damp and drizzle and thaw . . .
as a Hill-lark—methought my heart I saw.
And ever in fitful loops he flew,
or mounted in spires to the quiet blue;
outleaping the walls, the winds upbuild
of toppling radiances sun-thrilled;
thro' golden dazzle, on, higher and higher
to where bliss upholdeth the wings of desire.
By the hush and solitude undeterred,
poised on the vast, alone, wee Bird,
quick atom of hope and faith and might,
possessing the heaven in voiceless delight,
what aileth thee, now? Art insecure
Lord of the still, the sunny, the pure?
Alas, as a fluttering flake of snow
falls from a cloud to the valley below;
falling, then striving to rise again,
dreading pollution in footprints of men;
falling and rising, yet surely bound
for some low spot of the pitiless ground;
so, fell my Soul—and unseen, unheard,
hopeless and songless had vanished my Bird.

II.

EARLY SPRING

Rain-swollen creeks invaded
the low glades with pool and bog.
Bare hickories and white oaks waded
in stealthy drifts of fog.

The ghostly drip and patter
of the thaw;—else never a sound,
save now and again the clatter
of a dead branch dropping to ground.

Lo, where my Dream-bird clinging
to yon topmost beechen spray
setteth the drear woods ringing
with a passionate dismay!

What fellow and mate abideth
in the dumb and cold unknown?
to hear and heed when He chideth
and waileth and calleth alone?

Yet if none be won of his wooing
with warble and gurgle and trill,
't is the cry of a soul's undoing,—
the rapture and ache that kill.

III.

THE MATE

Why tarrieth she so late
in sun-parched clime?
Or would not my Dream-bird wait
for the trysting-time?

Doth She not hearken, and 'bide
in the covert, and yearn—
for pity, and throbbing pride,—
till the note he learn

of despair, that enraptureth
and maketh her his? . . .
for the life, begot in the death
of the dream that is?

Ay, She panteth in hope and fear
lest he sing too late
the song that slayeth to hear,
and doth, slaying, create?

Speak, speak—doth she hearken somewhere
in the cheerless cold,
for that shout of divine despair,
of love unconsoled?

Or, is there None at all
in the woodland drear?—
None, None his passionate call,
his complaint to hear?

IV.

THE DEATH-SONG

Methought a hundred Echoes sang,
as louder the song of my Dream-bird rang.
They caught his catches, the tricky elves—
how should it tire their soulless selves?
For the pang of his strain, not theirs to feel.
Quaver, and trill, and jubilant peel,
sob, and moan, and piteous cry—
they followed and mocked, now far, now nigh.
They seemed, as fainter his notes became
to gather might for their merciless game.
My Dream-bird paused in his song; and aghast
he heard the echoes throb far and fast.
He deemed them rivals for her he wooed,
and rallied his strength in valiant mood.
A burst of melody skyward floats—
a glorious tempest of passionate notes.
But in vain the agonizing strain—
the shout, the call, and the sob in vain.
For the Echoes singing and laughing go;
they do not feel, they cannot know!
They only follow, and mimic, and mock
from hollow and height, from tree and rock.
At last he is still. His spirit is spent.
And the echoes jeeringly lament.
But the cruel mockers die after him soon,
and the drear woods ache in a death-cold swoon.
In tears I awoke at the chill gray dawn.
My heart, the Bird and the dream—were gone.

DREAM AND WAKING

(A Bridal-Poem in Seven Lyrics and Prelude)

SUNSET PRELUDE

Emptied of wine the bowl of blinding blaze,
wherewith the Day, that died as die proud days,
Eve's dusk and starlight pledg'd;
the daisy-suns have gather'd in their rays
snow-luminous, rosy-edg'd.

Eve held her mist-blue cup brimful of rest,
gray sleep, and silver dreams, and wishes blest,
to challenge His, aloft:—
both cups clast—shiver'd, inundating the West,
with slumberous passion soft.

Into the sea of Night, Day's wine hath poured,
stain'd it a moment—then gloom-billows roar'd
and foam'd and blacken'd all.
O sea of Night, vague, vast and silent-shor'd,
death-torpid thy billows fall!

I.

AN OLD NEST

Frail boughs of precious sprays,
that twine and press sweet blossoms cheek to cheek,
why, when no wayward breath essays
to tangle itself in your bright maze,
so tremulous? Speak, bright branches, speak.

"A nest lies hidden here—
an old year's nest through winter safely kept;
and happy boughs are we, for we're
of all the bloomy boughs most near
where innocent birds last summer slept!

Two wayfarers are flown
back to the nest of merry months gone-by;
and nestle wing to wing, unknown
of all the world save us alone,
and twitter in sleep, and dream they fly."

II.

A MOCKING-BIRD

A charm
lies closely over all;
no harm
can any soul befall.
So dark,
so still, O lovely night . . .
But hark,
what heavenly-sweet affright?

Burst, rise, irrepressible song!

To hearken—'t is to die,
to float away amid a wild-wing'd throng—
ecstatic notes—into the thrilling sky.

Rush waves, of impassion'd sound
till stars the dark abyss
enkindle; till ye flood us forth, and, drown'd,
cast us on shores remote of heaven's still bliss!

III.

THE OLD IDEAL

O boyish
Delight,
why haunt me
to-night?

Forgotten
almost, . . .
yea, merely
a ghost—

a misty
moongleam,
a fancy,
a dream,

a vision that
with dawn
must fade and
be gone!

IV.

THE BRIDE ASLEEP

No power hast Thou at all
on Her, my Bride.
Thou couldst enthrall
the youth that long since died,
never the man Thou darest here to haunt,—
Wraith of the past, Spirit of ill, avaunt!

She dreams of me . . . She breathes
upon my breast . . .
my hand ensheathes

Her little hand . . . 'T were best
never to wake when dreams are over-dear,—
never to wake—ever to slumber here.

V.

EVOCATION

What weird dream have I dream'd
hard to recall?
Ay! so meseem'd
I stood in some vast hall
lonely and sad, a disillusioned youth
loathing the lie—fearing the face of truth.

All the life since, became
unreal; yes, She
a myth, a name.

I yearn'd to bow the knee,
reverent to some strange Deity, my own
Creature-of-cloud, Witch-of-my-dreams unknown.

There mov'd unheard, but felt,
a shining Thing,
whose either wing
cover'd me as I knelt:—
"Vision of perfect being, holy, sweet,
let me remain—perish, but kiss thy feet!"

VI.

APPARITION AND EXORCISM

Face, white
'neath infinite night,
eyes, full of love and light,—
a mystic spell;
lips, rose
as dawn-lit snows,
quiver, then tightly close,
lest of their love too soon they tell;

soft gleams
of neck, dim dreams
of shoulders, arms, 'neath streams
of tumbling gloom:
Love's form
divine! A storm
of passion shakes me. Warm
with thy warm Self my ice-cold tomb!

Nay, Thou,
art even now
another's, for thy brow
my suit condemns;
and yet . . .
What snare is set—
shining and dewy-wet,
of grasses woven and daisy-stems?

Ensnar'd?
Nay,—who hath dar'd
to bind Night's Queen dark-hair'd
with mesh on mesh?
to throw
webs, silken, aglow
with dew-pearls, o'er thy snow—
stars gather'd in heaven's garden fresh?

Why rend
from end to end
those Eastern curtains? Bend
o'er me, strange Queen!
Thy face
hath lost its grace?
Fly, Siren, fly this place—
Some foe destroyeth thee unseen.

The sun!
The morn begun!
The stars blown out each one!
Day's diadems
flash bright.
The Witch-of-night,
the Siren moony-white
hath vanish'd in a flare of gems!

VII.

THE BRIDE AWAKE

Awake are the birds,
awake is my heart,
forgotten the words
which made Night's magical spell but now;

and happier am I,
for near me Thou art;
so sweet and so shy,
my Bride! Truth sweeter than Dreams
art Thou!

THE HAWK

(A Ballad of Dawn in Colloquy)

I.

First voice— SUNRISE PRELUDE

The Morn hath tiptoe stolen near to Night
and cast her upon him in love's delight!

Second voice—

Their arms enlac'd, their warm close lips have met,
her hair all unknotted—'t is twilight yet!

First voice—

With her pale Self she covers him. She seems
to lie like a snowdrift above his dreams.

Second voice—

White shines She, naked 'mid her golden hair,
and smiles as He dies—for the Day is there!

II.

Third voice— THE PIGEON

A Pigeon flies. Lo, it darts! it rocks in air,
till the plumes of its wings meet behind—
till the Foe is lost! But who can share
my joy? Who sing it forth? Oh! ne'er
to be gifted for utterance—doom unkind!

III.

First voice— THE LARK

Far up from the green of the field,
from the gold of the sunlit river,
from graves where mourners have kneel'd,
from boughs with their sparkle of beads ashiver,
up into the chalice of dawn—
from th' eye of night in the lily of day,
forth of his nest—is the Lark upgone
on his steep, clear, song-pav'd way.

Up, into the sky is he fled,
where the blue and the calm dwell ever,
where sounds of struggle are dead:
he hath vanquish'd its summit with wings' endeavor.
Then, shake out thy shower of notes!
The veins of silence with melody pulse.
Sing, little Lark, from thy throat of throats!
With thy joy heaven's heart convulse!

IV.

THE HAWK

Second voice—

A shadow!—a Foe—a scream!
a shudder—grim claws—
fiend's beak—keen eyes that gleam!
a flash—a pause.

A pitiful scream to hear—
a rush to the sky—
the Foe beneath!—no fear—
a triumph-cry!

V.

THE PAEAN

Both voices—

Shout, shout,
that the Fiend hath misst his prey!
Mad song, ring out
exultantly!

Thrill! Thrill!
In the heaven's great deep-blue eye,
bask thee, and still
sing, sing, on high!

VI.

Third voice— THE VOICELESS TRIUMPH

O Lark! my soul was rescued from its foe
but it knew not thy voicing occult
that can utter glee, and heavenward throw
the blissful soul to God! I glow
with the fire of thy triumph. Exult! Exult!

All voices and echoes—

Exult!

HIGHER MATHEMATICS

Two and two make five, say I!
This truth is as plain as day. For why?
The whole is more than the sum I take
of the parts;
thoughts, feelings, passions, do not make
human hearts;
sums are not wholes
with flowers and souls!
So two and two make five, say I!

WISHES

What, Love, our toddling baby
would be an angel bright?
Ha! The white-winged angel, maybe
would be baby,—if he might!

Would the rock—be the plashing river
that to the salt sea flows?
Or the river—the poplar aquiver
in the wind at even-close?

Would the rose be a moonrise lily,
or the lily a sunset rose?
Then why We so foolish silly?
Woe's me that no man knows.

A FATHER'S MEMORY

O, ho! my baby Bacchant
(Just three-years-old!)
Hop-skippping with fresh-cut thyrsis
o'er the dewy, briery wold;
a bright crown above her ringlets
of dandelion gold;

left hand—clutching blackberries—
squeezes and squirts their juice;
white frock leopard-spotted,
thorn-tattered to ribbons wind-loose;
and mouth choke-full of laughter
too crimson for human use!

Blessèd, blessèd Apparition
from years long long gone by,
come dancing prancing hither,
side-glancing, with wreath awry,
advancing the leaf-tipped thyrsis,
out-shouting the Bacchic cry!

For my heart and mind hang heavy,
and my body's eye droops dull.
Wild brier-roses? Fierce briers dew-berried?
Little hands their glories to cull? . . .
Haste hither, O haste hither, my Girlie,
Time's decree with thy smile to annul!

For still I know that thou skippest
and hoppest for eager glee
down the path to the ivied cabin,
calling shrilly for "Mamma" to see . . .
And 't is I—I only am banished
the old world of thy wee witchery : . .

While you,—you can scarce remember, . . .
puzzled, shamefast, as I speak.
"Oh, Father, dear, how silly!" . . .

And yet, ah, willy-nilly, I seek
in day-dream, yea, and in night-dream
to kiss that chubby cheek;

snatch the dimpled wriggler proudly
in greed beyond her ken;
clutch, squeeze juice-oozing fingers,
cram full the red mouth, and then—
toss passionately, ay, toss her to skyward
again, and again and again!

SELFISH GRIEF

"Lost! Lost!" Writhing with grief on God I cried
that He would grant me once, but once, to see
my Darling's face;—when lo, I woke, heart-free,
whirled in a heavenward eddy's spiral wide,
sucked up of hymns angelical. Blue-eyed
on river's bank, screaming for childish glee,
with happy playmates. . . . Yea, I know 't is he!
From stone to stone he leapt to the farther side,
over his golden locks a quick look cast,
and darted into glory shut from sight.
"Son, only the torrent of selfish tears men shed,
impassable, sundereth, (swift-glistening past
thy feet) love's hope from utmost love's delight!"
"What comfort, God, if still my child be dead?"

ADRIFT

Drift!
Who would care to lift
the cast-off rose
from the stream's traitorous breast?
No one knows
whose it was—where it bloomed—
Only, doomed—doomed—doomed—
It is best—
drift!

THE TWIN POPLAR

(A Summer Night's Reverie)

Among the mob of clover
 (their wee hoary heads nod-
 nodding to the wavy sod—)
we lie
 You and I
 by the placid cool lagoon.
Above us—the pale sky over—
 fluffed flocks of gleamy cloudlets flee—
 from the radiance keen
 of the enhaloed moon.
And shrubberies, fantastically free,
 exuberant tree-masses, loose and large,
 (Us and the sky's earth-touch between,)
 pile them along the farther marge,
 and fitfully pant in the wind and swerve and sway.
And thro' their midst, away, away
 lo, a forth-streaming wide . . .
 (athwart,
 to where the arched span of the bridge is
 for phantom feet . . .)
an animate hither-thither fair and fleet
 of dazzling shimmer
 in wayward sport
 that dieth soon
 to a ghostly glimmer
 against the hazy world-end ridges
 beneath the allhallowing haloed moon.
And somehow, Dear,
 hearkening, meseems I hear
 the laughter faint of ripply lips. . . .
And thine eyes and mine converge
 (Hark, the dew from the trailing lilac drips!)
involuntarily upon yon tall twin Poplar grey
 in the invisible spirit urge
 now blessedly one, now twain again
 as for rapturous lover's play. . . .

(What subtle fragrance wafted over
maketh breathing delicious pain?
Or is it close about us, the honey-clover
nod-nodding sweet-gossipwise
to the glistenings and grass-lispings of the sod?)
Ha! How yon Poplar doth thine eyes
and mine fascinate—mirk-rooted, ghost-sure
in mystery, where the living shimmer
fadeth dimmer
and doth grope
to feel of the misty sward slope. . . .

(Dear God, how pitifully poor
whom thou givest no wealth of love so! . . .)
For lo, lo!
into the vague, the Poplar lifteth yon cloven shadow-
flame,
then anon—still, still very, very silvery,
together glideth one forever and the same.
.
Dreamed have we the silence that requireth
no speech.
Such marrying of pure body and lofty soul
as inspireth
the play of twain—each in each—
ever free, ever whole;
such lifting up foregathered into the light—
such rooting down—deep, deep
by effulgent waters, watch eternally to keep
nigh the bridge whose mystic span
bindeth Eden to Eden, man to man. . . .
Love still is gracious, tenderly heart-single. . . .

(Ha! the wicked titter
of silly leaves in the gust overhead—
the cynical glitter
in the moon too cruelly unveiled. . . .
That we failed
that our high noon of youth is dead!

The clover noddles wag and wag,
part and meet,
and ripples mocking wink
nag and brag
at the brink
by our feet. . . .)

Love still is gracious, tenderly heart-single
tho' from his dizzy heights perhaps
he hath suffered his proud soaring ways to lapse
to some bloom-dingle
of shy oblivious sweetness—
some glow-glad cottage ingle
where petty joys commingle
to a comforting completeness. . . .

But this ache, ah, this ache!

what tho' all this shamefast while

(Not thy smile

can the spell, Dear, of unearthly wonder break!)

We against love who unaware have sinned,

we, on the hither bank of the lagoon

prove the illusion—to be dissipated soon;

and yonder, We, unwittingly we,

our very Selves wave in the wind,

uplifted from the grey-green of the gloom

for the play of spirit; in quest of freer room—

yea, the still moon-silvery scope

of a mysterious

imperious

holy hope?

Who knoweth which we truest be

(O glory that forth floweth!

O fragrant wind that bloweth!)

the soul in flesh we feel not, or the soul in dream we see?

Who knoweth tonight, who knoweth?

PARENTAL CONSENT

"You will live to have love—love—love?"
Love, did you say?
Ah, little child, do you understand
what thing you ask?
A period of happy dreams and hopes—
poetic imaginings,—
like bees thro' bloomy paradises
a-wing in the sun,
gathering the honey to store in their hive—
the soul of the beloved . . .
for the world to rob to the din of its creeds?
Say rather, you want
illusion first, and then—ah, disillusion;
patient efforts,
cruel efforts to revive the dead,
recall the forgotten.
You want delicious dependence dear
to alternâte
with fierce despair of freedom;—alas!
surrender yourself you do not dare,
nor can you wholly
withhold yourself! You want, I know,
disappointments, griefs
together borne; and vexations also
that part sunder
utterly soul from soul;—woes, shames,
pitiful sorrows
for which each blames the other, tho' both
be innocent;
of which either blames himself in secret,
tho' both be guilty.
Ah, child, my own sweet, smiling child,
I still can see
the little babe—(You cannot, for you
have forgotten that babe)—
you want to know life now, death, the agonies,
hazards, and blisses
incommunicable? Ay, you are right,

none will deny it:—
 to be gloriously miserable
 at the worst, is better
 than the common content of day after day,
 in which one knows not
 the strength of the soul, and forgets there is heaven
 and hell. You are right.
 "To live for love only—for love and for love!"
 It is foolish, I think?
 Yes, and wise also, my child, very wise.
 We, your elders,
 who once were foolish as you, would not have you
 wiser, God knows—
 only more foolish, maybe, tho' our heart
 must ache with your ache.
 Oh, to be foolish again as you, more foolish
 and wiser so!
 Therefore we will weave you the bridal wreath,
 we will smile
 gaily, but of you unheard, in our hearts
 (forgive us, for who
 can help misgivings and bodings?) the bell
 shall toll away,
 toll to the peal of joy—the sobbing knell
 for us of our child. . . .
 The child whom often in dreams I see
 by ocean beach,
 toy-pail and spade in hand, little dress
 tucked up—bare legs,
 chubby feet splash-splash
 in the foam of the spent green surf!
 The bell shall toll
 the knell of memories, hopes fulfilled.
 But you shall hear not—
 only for you the happy peal, and the cries
 "God bless you, God bless you!"
 And—God bless you indeed, tho' our eyes
 fill with tears
 while we tell you how happy we are
 that you—have love!

THE WIDOWER

A respite grant, Love, if no dear relief;
lest maddened by this torturing fell Woe
I perish not, but work thine overthrow
of whom he holdeth right and might in feof.
O Love, my Lord, of caitiffs am I chief
on whom thou dost such guerdon misbestow;
the spirit's extreme ordeal to undergo!
Shall grief slay—whoso slew nót thee and grief?

I cannot hearken now her wooing voice,
be rapt in her embraces safe and close;—
in vain with her thou biddest me rejoice,
downtethered here 'mid sensual things and gross!
Disloyal to the past—or maimed, morose?
Nay, canst thou offer Love, no holier choice?

THE BEECHES OF FERN BANK

I.

FELLOWSHIP

O beeches, dear Fern Bank beeches,
I greet you in haste as I pass.
How vast, still, and tender your reach is
over the wavy grass!
Your boughs (droop they moveless, or stir they,
soft-swaying in the summery air,)
are inviting me—all unworthy—
your fellowship true to share.

O beeches, dear Fern Bank beeches,
men may envy your vigor and grace:
for, grown great in your brotherhood, each is
content with his ancient place;
not restive as We and ambitious,
with our fate perversely at strife.
What better, dear trees, can ye wish us
than with You—to live our life?

O beeches, dear Fern Bank beeches,
a consecrate grove ye are,
for Dantes and chaste Beatrices
in the glimmer of the twilight star;
for memories, ecstasical fancies
alone in the mid of the night;
not bann'd from your shadow romance is,
or Utopian devotion to right!

O beeches, dear Fern Bank beeches,
calm warders of river and road,
persuasive your whispered speech is,—
with You will I make mine abode;
and study as You to stand quiet
upreaching to heaven in prayer
for this beautiful Earth, so nigh it,
while fondling its undulant hair!

II.

FAREWELL

Gleams the moon in the Fern Bank beeches!
How each mystic shadow reaches
down the softly grey-green slopes
of dew-wet grass!
Ah, my heart, my heart is aching—
hurt by dread of a long leave-taking,
for the ghosts of happy hopes
on the night wind pass.

Dreams the moon in the Fern Bank beeches?
hark, how intimate their speech is,
meant for none but loving ears
to comprehend:
wistfully they query whether
quite in vain we've lived together,
shared our longings, fancies, fears—
that all should end?

Nay, old stalwarts, ancient beeches,
though my soul your help beseeches,
nought can Ye to stay the course
of human fate.

Blessèd Ye, that here forever
rooted rise with no endeavor,
knowing no regret, remorse,
no doubt, no hate!

Ah, how gracious each to each is,
hallowed fellowship of beeches
by the gleaming river bank
at watch, and ward!

Would the human friend and lover
might your magic spell discover,
getting, giving holy thank
in sweet accord!

Your close bonds not death can sever,
faith and hope will fail you never,
earth beneath, and sky above,
green hills around;

blessèd, blessèd Fern Bank beeches!

Us—'t is loss alone that teaches
how to make with wealth of love
our life abound.

TO THE TWO LITTLE LADIES

CLARA SYLVIA

AND

PHOEBE

FOR WHOM THE STORY OF THE DEWDROPS WAS ORIGINALLY
"MADE UP"

BE THE THING NOW DONE INTO RIME

MOST LOVINGLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR PLAYFELLOW

THE DEWDROPS

"WHERE MORE IS MEANT THAN MEETS THE EAR"

A PHANTASY

IN TWO TABLEAUX AND THIRTEEN SCENES

BEING AN ENTERTAINMENT FOR
BIG FOLKS BY LITTLE PEOPLE

GIVEN IN ALAMEDA
AT CHRIST CHURCH
FALL FESTIVAL, 1905

SYNOPSIS

Tableau I. The Death of the Drops

- N. B.*—Trees at Right and Left. The Oak, Elm, and Beech are grouped at back of stage. Across Center stage, back, a tinsel web is hung on the branches. The Drops—Green, Blue, Red, Golden, and Violet—are grouped before it as though hanging there. The Spider is above the web at Right.
- Scene I.*—The Fairy Queen causes the Dew to appear by the magic of her Pansy.
- Scene II.*—The Dewdrops, laughing in the meshes of a huge spiderweb, beg the Moon to abide with them forever.
- Scene III.*—They are amazed at the appearance of flying things like stars of heaven, or themselves, the stars of earth; and the Ghostmoth explains their nature.
- Scene IV.*—The Spider, hypocrite, ascetic, sensualist, in whose Web the Dewdrops hang, invokes the Wind to rid him of their noxious presence.
- Scene V.*—The Trees discourse of the Wind's coming, and the Ghostmoth bids them a last adieu.
- Scene VI.*—The Wind of Death blows to the terror of the Dewdrops, but the Golden Drop and the Blue Drop are full of faith, and leap down from the Web of Life.
- Scene VII.*—The Droplets, into which the falling Dewdrops broke, sing their gleeful Hymn of New Life.

Tableau II. The Doom of the Dew

- N. B.*—The web is removed, and the hedge appears to the rear across the stage. Flowers are grouped to right and left, a dead branch of an oak comes over the hedge, on which the Treetoad may squat.
- Scene VIII.*—The Droplets rejoice, arousing the wrath of the Treetoad (professional prophet of evil, iconoclast, and materialistic cynic), and, growing to drops in the increasing dusk, they overhear the Wisdom of the Trees.
- Scene IX.*—The Dewdrops, thus comforted, sing of the Unseen Glory; whereupon the Treetoad bursts into such fierce railing that all the Dewdrops faint for horror.
- Scene X.*—Toward dawn they recover consciousness, and are startled and gladdened by the little optimist, the Wren.
- Scene XI.*—Fearing, and hoping, the day begins; the flowers appear in new color; the Ruby-throat assures them the Sun is a flower, but they prefer to believe him a vast Dewdrop, and are edified greatly by the Vision of Last Things, vouchsafed to the Golden Drop.
- Scene XII.*—Gradually drawn up into the warm air, their spirits sing a heavenly rapture of Assumption.
- Scene XIII.*—The Fairy Queen comes forth in the front of the stage as Epilogue to gladden the folk in the pit with thoughts of their own eternal childhood of soul, while the attendant fays and fairies engage in a ballet of pantomime.

TABLEAU I. THE DEATH OF THE DEWDROPS

SCENE I. THE ENCHANTMENT

(Enter Fairy Queen, in front of Tableau Curtain. Takes C. stage, waving wand, and speaking a spell.)

Fairy Queen:

O the dew, the dew, on sprig and spray!
on tendril, frond, blade, petal, plume—

Fay Chorus *(invisible)*:

blinking and winking to swing and sway
of moonrise sheen and cool perfume.

Fairy Queen:

O the dew, the dew, in hallowed hush
of the hovering haze and mystery born—

Fay Chorus *(invisible)*:

blinking and winking from leafage lush,
from moss-strand, silken web and thorn.

(Enter Fay Chorus, softly, on tip-toe from R. and L.)

Fairy Queen:

To the wafts of verbenia and heliotrope,
to the whiffs of orange-bloom and musk,

Fay Chorus *(dancing lightly)*:

big grow the dewdrops for glee and hope,
in shimmer and glimmer and humid dusk.

(A moment of silence while all move in a ballet of listening.)

What blithe, fine tones! *(Jubilant.)* The Dew!

(Turning to the audience.) The dew!

(Chorus of Fays divides into groups R. and L.)

Fay Chorus *(R. and L. alternating)*:

(R.) Poor—

(L.) folk—

(R.) that hear not—

(L.) the twinkling

(All.) Choir!

Fairy Queen (*pitifully to the audience*):

Touch eyelid and ear with the Pansy blue,

(Chorus R.) And ho!—

(L.) Lo!—

(All.) Your dream-world of Desire!

(*The Chorus of Fays vanishes to R. and L. as Tableau curtain rises leaving the Queen in the center. Chorus of Dewdrops grouped about her to rearward. Scene as described in Tableau I.*)

SCENE II. THE MOON

The Dewdrop Chorus (*to ballet motions, sing "The Chant of the Dew"*):

See—

We—

be—

(*Bowing.*)

the tiny—

shiny—

Dew!

(*Moving arms gracefully.*)

We dangle—

and bespangle—

the bloom-tangle—

wet!

(*Prolonging tone as for an incantation.*)

blinking—

and winking—

Moon—

Moon—

at you!

And we croon—

"So soon?"

"Nay, leave us not yet!"

(*Livelier.*)

For on leaf-tip, fern-frond, wisp of grass,

we are growing, ho, growing

big and wise!

(*With motions sweeping the zenith.*)

And ho!
We know—
as slow—
you pass—
you love us well—
white—
light—
of the skies!

(*They kneel, surrounding Queen, arms and bodies swaying.
Looking up rapturously.*)

For winsome we dartle
in silvery shoon—
o'er
the far-away floor
of skyey sheen;
and for joy we startle
or slumber aswoon
on the swaying air of the garden green!

Fairy Queen (*sadly, to herself; the Dewdrops looking at one another as if they half heard, and wondering at the unseen speaker*):

They deem the stars their kin
that dwell
high in the sky!
How strong, poor dreamers dear, the spell!
For far is nigh,
and nigh, alas!
is far, so far!
Dew in the grass,
in heaven, the star!

(*During last lines Queen, slowly waving wand, approaches L.
1st E. Exit at last line.*)

(*Dewdrops rub their eyes, shake themselves, and rise. As they chant final lines, they group at R. and L. up stage, with arms uplifted to the Moon.*)

Chorus of Dewdrops:

Oh, the dew-folk above,
as we on earth,

all beg you, for love,
dear Moon,
one boon!
We will rollic
ay—and frolic,
and make you mirth,
if you 'll stay with us, stay
for aye—
white Moon!

SCENE III. THE FIREFLIES

Red Drop: Look!
Blue Drop: Look!
Golden Drop: What was that flash—
of grass-green light?
Green Drop: Why, one of us!
Red Drop: Some rash
young Dewdrop spright!
(Ghostmoth enters from R. and flutters back and forth among them.)
Violet Drop: Nay, fly thro' empty air?
No wings have we!
Blue Drop: We 'd fly if we could dare
to fling us free!
Red Drop: A fire-spark on the breeze
blown hither and yon!
Violet Drop: So high?
Green Drop: Over tops of trees?
Blue Drop: In the moonshine wan?
Ghostmoth *(fluttering among them)*:
Poor silly people of dew!
Dewdrop Chorus: *(Right.)*
Ghostmoth, you know?
Ghostmoth *(to the Red Drop)*:
They 're firefolk,
(to the Golden drop)
bright, like you!
that come and go,
part moth, part dewdrop, they!

Golden Drop: Half-sisters!
 Green Drop: Weird!
 Blue Drop: The hoped-for marvel!
 Violet Drop: Nay,
 the mystery feared!
 Blue Drop and Golden Drop (*singing*):
 Be they most-drop or most-moth:
 Or half fairly and half
 we be glad . . .
 Green Drop: sad,
 Golden Drop: good Ghostmoth!
 Violet Drop: We should weep.
 Red Drop: We would laugh!
 Blue Drop: Why tremble?
 Violet Drop: That a change
 might come on us.
 Red Drop: Into some being strange?
 Golden Drop: Mysterious?
 Blue Drop: Nay, that were also glee!
 Green Drop: As dear as this?
 Golden Drop: Oh, anyhow to be
 Blue Drop and Golden Drop:
 is bliss—is bliss!
 (*The Dewdrops clasp their hands in ecstasy. All their move-
 ments should be slow.*)

SCENE IV. THE SPIDER

(*The trees sway with low, moaning sounds. The Dewdrops
 shiver slightly.*)

Violet Drop: Watch the tree-tops moving
 athwart the sky.
 Green Drop: Our wisdom reproving.
 Red Drop: They wave us good-by.
 Blue Drop: In the heaven they're caressing
 yon velvety room.
 Golden Drop: With boughs of mist blessing
 The glimmering gloom.

The Spider: (*Waves front legs about. At the sound of his voice the Ghostmoth flutters out R.*)

O Wind, good Wind, kind Wind!

Hearken, hearken, and heed!

Violet Drop: What is the Wind, I wonder?

Green Drop: The Oak's and the Elm's playfellow?

Red Drop:

A thing that with lightning and thunder
will leap and roar and bellow!

Spider: O Wind, good Wind, kind Wind,
which much lovest the spider breed!

Red Drop: The truth I told. For methinks
the owley-eyed Ghostmoth knows
who gossips with double-pinks
and tickles the baby-rose;
who flirts with jessamine wreaths,
and kisses the columbine;
and in breaths-of-heaven deep breathes
to blow in the trumpet-vine!

Golden Drop:

Yet whoever, 'mong Dewdrops, heard
of lightning and thunder before?

Blue Drop: The Ghostmoth told you?

Golden Drop: Absurd!

Blue Drop: Mere fancy!

Golden Drop: Leap!

Blue Drop: Bellow?

Golden Drop: And roar?

Spider: Wind, Wind, good Wind, kind Wind!

Hearken, hearken thy Spider;
who in nothing hath sinned,
long fasting by law;
yet most thankfully grinned,
when he gluttet his maw.

O Wind, good Wind, kind Wind!

Golden Drop: What horrors I hear
against my will!

Blue Drop: I shudder!

Red Drop: I fear!

Green Drop: O hush!

Violet Drop: Be still!

Spider: The bird and butterfly
despise thy faithful Spider.
Poor sillies, that can't tell why
they flit and flutter by.
They know thee not as I,
Thou rich provider!

Violet Drop: An evil spell
he droneth—alas!

Green Drop: Ah, who can tell
what cometh to pass?

Spider: The wasp and bumble-bee
in yellow hats and hosen,
they deem them fair and free,
buzzing right busily.
Poor honey thieves! But we,
We be thy chosen!

Golden Drop: Think you the Wind
will hearken and come?

Green Drop: He's jealous.

Red Drop: Chagrin'd.

Violet Drop: I would he were dumb!

Spider: To work and wait and trust
our wont and use and duty.
Thou riddest of dew and dust
that harm us and disgust
our webs, for thou art just,
to worth and beauty!

Golden Drop: A loathsome thought!

Blue Drop: The dust like the dew!

Green Drop: By doubts distraught, . . .

Violet Drop: O, would that I knew!

Spider: O Wind, good Wind, kind Wind,
Hearken, hearken thy Spider!
Thy thrifty down-glider,
on sticky thread,
who spins his web wider,
and squats overhead—
the steadfast abider,
thy modest self-hider,

on gnats and flies and lady-bugs fed.
Come quickly, O Wind, kind Wind!
(*With the closing lines the Spider descends, and scurries
away R.*)

SCENE V. THE TREES

The Oak: Ho, the Wind is coming, brothers,
I feel it in leaf and twig! (*Sways.*)

The Beech (*to the Elm*):
He little recks of others
who are n't as stout and big!

The Oak: Ho, the Wind is coming, I feel it,
in bough and knotty limb!

The Elm (*to the Beech*):
He is happy and can't conceal it.

The Beech (*to the Elm*):
Ah, trouble will temper him!

The Oak: O brothers, the gladsome tremble,
in bole and trunk and root!
Wild goblins of air assemble
to whistle and hollo and hoot!

The Elm: I hate this bluster and wrestle
that distract from our skyward look.

The Beech: Our sisters who cluster and nestle
will be torn in their lowliest nook.

The Oak: If only the warfare were truceless,
none could live but the brave and robust.

The Beech: Are our blossoming kinsfolk useless?

The Elm: Shall they fight as we? Is it just?
(*The Ghostmoth flutters in from R. Flits about from Dewdrop
to Dewdrop.*)

The Ghostmoth: The fireflies, helter-skelter
and scurrying off to shelter.
And Ghostmoth, too, must hide him,
(snails, earwigs, and beetles beside him,)
in a dusty crack of the bark,
in a knot-hole dank and dark,
lest the Wind his body tear.
Dear Dewdrops, have a care.

I shudder for you! Ah, why
can't shiny Dewdrops fly?
For then, we might together
outlive the boisterous weather.
Farewell, sweet friends, good-by!

(Aside as he flits away.)

O, that beauty so soon must die! *(Exit L.)*

(Shivering among the Dewdrops.)

Green Drop: He saith:

"'Tis death!"

Golden Drop: If all must die,
it should
be good
to die—
say I!

Blue Drop: At last!

Violet Drop: He's near!

Red Drop: Hold fast!

Violet Drop: He's here. *(They lean toward each other.)*

The Wind *(invisible)*:

I'm the Wind who would wistfully woo you,
Woo! Woo!

(Trees sway and moan.)

The Elm: O Wind, you're a bully and coward,
not to show your face when you smite!

The Wind: Who'll go round and under and thro' you,
You! You!

The Beech: On bushes dainty-flowered
why wreak your savage spite?

The Wind: Who'll strip and uproot and undo you?
Who? Who?

(The Dewdrops shiver and lean toward each other.)

Violet Drop: Heart sore!

Green Drop: Soul-sick!

Red Drop: What roar!

Violet and Green Drops: Help! Quick!

Red Drop: The ache
benumbs.

Blue Drop: I quake!

Golden Drop: Death comes!

The Oak:

Tho' I the more boldly and proudly uptowered,
Brothers, we're shamed by your moan and groan!

The Beech: I spoke out my mind.

The Elm: I called him coward!

The Oak (*sarcastically*):

And so, away, ye deem, he's flown?

SCENE VI. THE WIND OF DEATH

(*The Trees sway more violently with moaning sounds. One of the Dewdrop Chorus at rear R. who has had no spoken part, drops out of sight behind slanting approach. Two little boys at L. run down stage, joined by two little girls from R. on the way. They chant.*)

Dewdrop: (R.) I drop, I run,
fall—break!

Two Droplets: (R.) To—make—
me—more!

Two Droplets: For one—and one
are—two!

The Four Droplets: And two—and two
are—four!

(*All the Droplets Chorus, repeating the above words and business as often as desired, four by four, run down and dance all together in a ring.*)

Wind-begotten
from on high,
Dew-born,
small, small—
but unspotten—
why, why
would you mourn
our fall?

(*They group themselves to R. and L. of Big Drops, turning toward them.*)

still clinging
to the old?

Come, leap
from the strife!
Drop singing
fourfold,
into deep
New Life!

Golden Drop and Blue Drop (*more and more agitated, croon
this dirge*):

If first we go,
or last we stop,
if fast, or slow,
what matter, Dewdrop?

Violet Drop (*imploringly*):

Hush, dears,
my fears
you excite!

Golden Drop: For lo, we know,
none long may abide

Blue Drop: In panic and woe,
in glory and pride.

Red Drop (*defiantly*):

I have fought,
this thought,
and yet fight!

Blue Drop and Golden Drop (*alternating*):

There is none, nay none,
but must somehow slip,
downglide to run,
close-cleave to drip.

Green Drop (*in terror*):

O the leap
to the deep,
from the height!

Golden Drop: What matter,
despairer,
so we spatter,
to glitter?

Blue Drop: So we shatter
 to fairer,
 so we scatter
 to fitter?

Red Drop (*angrily*):
 I'll delay
 while I may,
 the delight.

Red, Violet, and Green Drops:
 We would hold
 to the old,
 if we might!

*(Golden Drop and Blue Drop let go and repeat the business of
the first Drop that fell.)*

Red Drop: What befell?

Green and Violet Drops:
 Who can tell?

Golden and Blue Drops (*running*):
 Good night!

(Droplets run in with same words and business as above.)

SCENE VII. THE DROPLETS

(The Droplets down stage greet the incoming Droplets.)

The Newcomers:
 We flew
 to the new,
 as our right.

The Older Droplets:
 The Red, and Green, and Blue,
 the Violet, and Golden dew,
 held, O so tight, so tight!
 But they danced, and shook and fell,
 and broke, and ran pell-mell!

Newcomers: And lo, we alight, we alight!

First (*Red*) Droplet:
 I am fire,—
 my desire
 fulfilled!

Second and Third (*Blue*) Droplets:

We be sky,
(you and I,)
as we willed!

Fourth and Fifth (*Green*) Droplets:

Such green,
who hath seen?

Sixth (*Gold*) Droplet:

or such gold?

Grand Chorus: Of the shade,
that we prayed,
heart-bold!

Right Semi Chorus:

If fated or free,
if mine or his,

Left Semi Chorus:

the hope to be,
and the fear that is,

Grand Chorus: all's one to me,
come that, come this—
for the hither is glee,
and the yonder, bliss!

(*Violet, Green, and Red Drops fall. The Droplet Chorus runs
out R. and L., singing: "I drop, I run," etc.*)

CURTAIN.

TABLEAU II. THE DOOM OF THE DEW

SCENE VIII. THE MOON SET

(The Big Drops are grouped Center stage. Droplet Chorus R. and L. Treetoad on top of Oak Branch L. up stage.)

Droplet Chorus: (R.)

From wee to big,
they grew—and grew,

Chorus: (L.) on blooming sprig
and leafy twig

All: the merrymaking dew!

Chorus: (R.) From big to wee
we broke—

Chorus: (L.) but woke
again to be

All: the glad, the free,
the starry-twinkling folk!

The Treetoad *(breaks in harshly)*:

Be still, you silly,
simpleton rout!

(Moon begins to set behind branches.)

There! Willy nilly,
your light goes out.

(Stage slowly darkens.)

'Tis only reflected
from yon high lamp.

(Points to last edge of moon.)

You saucy, affected,
twinkles of damp!

(The Droplets exeunt softly, the Drops taking their room in the front of the stage.)

Blue Drop: Who be you to joy in evil—
uttering ugly words and rude?

Red Drop: Whom do we harm, if insooth we believe ill?
How jar we on your solitude?

Treetoad: Treetoad am I—a prophet uncouth,
on my crooked oak-limb asquat;
whence boldly I rouse the world to truth,
decreeing what is what—and not!

For lo, I know of wind and rain,
long ages ere they blow and fall!
My trill and croak be oracles plain,
understood and dreaded of all!

(The Elm and the Beech, softly swaying, sing low the following dirge.)

- Elm: Lower and lower, slowly down
glides the silver glory.
- Beech: Twinkle and shimmer in darkness drown,
all, all is transitory.
- The Three Trees Together:
But moon goes forth, and stars come in;
awed we stand, beholding
the olden end, and the new begin;
fall followed of fresh unfolding.
- Red Drop: You hear the speech
of Elm and Beech?
- Violet Drop: Ay, soft aeolian tones.
- Golden Drop: What wisdom strange,
of chance and change!
- Blue Drop: What sorrowful, sweet moans!
- Golden Drop: They know so much.
- Blue Drop: The stars they touch.
- Golden Drop: Their tops yet see the Moon.
- Violet Drop: Long mosses grey
hang mistily,
and their branches vast festoon.
- Green Drop: I tremble, aghast,
to mark how fast
our light hath dwindled pale.
- Violet Drop: The Treetoad's queer,
and cross—but a seer.
- Red Drop: Soothsayings oft-times fail.
- Blue Drop: He's over glad
to tell the bad . . .
- Golden Drop: and the truly-wise, methinks
make understood
the fair and the good . . .

Blue Drop: they glimpse thro' the cracks and the clinks!
Golden Drop: Ah, let us learn
from such to yearn
for all things good and fair.
Blue Drop: And calmly trust
new gladness must
come forth of our cark and care.

SCENE IX. THE TREETOAD

(A gauze curtain is dropped to dim the scene.)

The Dewdrops *(swaying together, sing)*:
Our love we are wont to croon
to the big, round, beautiful Moon
in the high and far away.
But quite is the splendor gone,
his halo of shine withdrawn,
while We—we stay, and stay.

Be the stars—our wonder and pride
our kinsfolk multiplied?

'T is to tell us: "All is well!"
Not ours the jealous plaint,
tho' feeble our gleam and faint,
and we fade invisible.

For the Wind of Death fierce blew;
wherefrom at length we knew
that life is more and more.
Be the light then less and less,
thro' dim and dark we guess
a Glory to adore.

Treetoad: O stupid rabble,
no knowledge, no wit!
Alone fool's babble
proves infinite!

Your hope's immodest,
your faith absurd,
your reasoning the oddest
the world has yet heard.

For what can continue
above you, below?
without you, within you?
What cometh must go!

None ever returneth,
tho' others appear.
A fool, then, who yearneth
for more than is here.

But Dewdrop noddle
with thinking might ache!
So, a lie, dears, coddle
for phantasy sake.

Yet for worse, for better,
for better, for worse,
I will hold to the letter
and the spirit—I curse!

Green Drop: I knew our hymn
he would deride.

Red Drop: He's clammy and grim
and goggle-eyed.

Violet Drop: The godless wretch
doth pride exalt!

Green Drop: He'll find you, and fetch
a flaw, a fault . . .

Golden Drop: in starry dew

Blue Drop: and dewy stars,

Red Drop: the evil he pursues,

Golden Drop: and the perfect he mars.

Treetoad: Ha, ha! You will cherish
a flattering lie?
"All, all must perish
save you and I?"

How strangely amusing
your cool conceit!
And your betters abusing,
what noble heat!

From fixed star and planet,
your pedigree's proved?
Why not rather from granite,
by tempest unmoved?

Tho' the thought be distasteful—
a wicked doubt—
meseems—the world's wasteful
of dewdrops devout!

You think it should stick to
such miracles rare?
But—"mirabile dictu"—
it does n't much care!

And why? There be plenty
to prance in your place.
So—"festina lente!"—
you'll vanish apace.

The end of the story
the dewdrop-kind—
"memento mori"—
should keep it in mind!

Good-by, poor sillies,
your doom is foreshown;
and now my good will is,
to leave you alone!

(Exit Treetoad R.)

*(The Dewdrops all faint away. Form in groups across stage.
Pause, with soft, dreamy music.)*

SCENE X. THE DAWN

(*Soft music.*)

Violet Drop (*waking*):

I shiver with strange cold
in fitful whiffs of air.

Green Drop (*aroused and dazed; sitting up*):

No dewdrop twinkles and glisters?
Where be you, O my sisters?

Red Drop: The earth, it waxeth old,
the happy skies outwear.

Green Drop: The stars are fading dimmer
in a haze of mazy glimmer.

Violet Drop: Gone—gone! And unconsolated
we sorrow!—Where? Oh, where?

Golden Drop (*stands, hesitatingly*):

Maybe, tho' darkness hide them,
no evil doth betide them!

Blue Drop (*rising, taken with the new suggestion*):

Sad converse sweet they hold?
As we, their wonder share?

(*The rest of the Dewdrops slowly rise.*)

Golden Drop (*mysteriously*):

Ah, while they dim and darken—
th' hushed whisper within they hearken

Violet Drop (*with awe*):

as nigher the feel, and the fold
of the dream-like slow despair!

(*The Cockwren hops out from R down stage. The Dewdrops start back in afright and gather in group at back of stage. Their fear is soon overcome by the cheerful tones of the Wren as he hops back to the hedge top.*)

Cockwren (*to his mate in the nest on the hedge*):

From the fairyland of sleep
awaken, O, awaken,
Puff-o-down, you and I!
From the nest-rim a peep,
fluffed wing-feathers shaken—
then hop, flit and fly!

Out-twitter we the chill
that the dawn-world numbeth,—
flutter and twitter away,
with expectance athrill,—
for He cometh, He cometh
over dingle and brae.

Violet Drop: Who, sisters, cometh think you? Death?
that the wren on the hedge-top twittereth?
Green Drop: The Treetoad a doom of woe foretold.
Blue Drop: Is wisest he, who most liketh to scold?
Red Drop: Mayhap that cross-patch prophet erred!
Golden Drop: I am fain to believe the blithesome bird.
Violet Drop: So restless and eager,—can any be wise?
'T is surely Death shall awake and arise.
Green Drop: Ay, the stars be one by one extinct,
and our fate with the fate of them is linkt.
Violet Drop: No feignèd hope, no craven dismay,—
Await we the mystery cold and grey.

The Wren (*hopping about in great excitement*):
With dewdrops thickly
the world is sown.
He cometh quickly
from the golden Unknown

to quicken and gladden,
to kindle and warm;
with passion to madden,
with love to transform.

Violet Drop: What rosy hues
the skies suffuse!
Green Drop: A veil withdrawn.
The Wren: The Dawn!—the Dawn!
Red Drop: The marvel grows!
It flashes—it glows!
All the Drops:
The gloom undone—
the glory hath won!

(The light grows on the stage.)

The Wren: The Sun—

All the Drops: the Sun?

The Wren: The Sun!

Red Drop: The blaze mounts higher.
The hedge is on fire!

Blue Drop: Hark fluty notes
from a myriad throats!

Golden Drop: The heaven aflame—
light everywhere!

(Bright light. All raise their arms and look upward in wonder.)

The Wren: The Day, Sweetheart!

The Dewdrops:

The Day?

The Wren: The Day!

SCENE XI. THE RUBY-THROAT

(The Dewdrops blaze out in light thrown on their tinselled costumes, and bejewelled little persons.)

Dewdrops: Glad amber, soft turkis,
shy amethyst,
gay emerald, clear topaz,—
tho' daughters of mist;

Brave diamond, bold ruby
in radiant array,
we thank thee, and worship
bright Sun-lord of Day!

(Ruby-throat enters from R. He flits in and out among the Dewdrops.)

Ruby-Throat: As I hum and boom
from bloom to bloom,
still poised in air for greedy bliss,
the wind of my wings
a panic flings
'mong the dewy-clustered clematis.

Ho! I chuckle at heart
as the Dewdrops start;
for the humming earth, 'mid-sky, like me,
hangs poised at the brink
of the Sun to drink
his heavenly honey of glamour and glee!

Red Drop: Lo, jack-in-the-pulpit,
and lady-smock fine,
Green Drop: Lo, larkspur, and foxglove,
and frail columbine,
Violet Drop: sweet-briar, honeysuckle,
Canterbury bells—

All Dewdrops:
What form and what color!
What sweet mingled smells!

Blue Drop: Yet, O Sun, thou art nowise
the King of the flowers;

Golden Drop: An infinite Dewdrop,
we know thou art Ours!

All: For do we not feel thee
updraw us to Thee?
and couldest thou draw us
wert Thou not as we?

Ruby-Throat (*protesting in friendly fashion to the Dewdrops,
who are too much concerned with each other to heed him
greatly*):

I am Ruby-Throat
the Happy;
so my knowledge,
it is scrappy,—
got here a bit,
there a bit,—
and for better
I don't care a bit;
as I'm positive
the Sun, dears,
is a sunflower—
or there's none, dears!

For the Sunflower
't is who told me—
don't be vexed, then,
and scold me!
I'm a kindly
good fellow,—
but, you see, both—
are yellow!

Violet Drop (*with a sense of impending doom*):

We brighten, but dwindle!
Shall this be the end?

Red Drop: To long for each other,
yet skyward ascend?

Blue Drop: In the heaven, O, Sun-drop
disperse us, and fuse

Green Drop: the many in one, Drop,
in thee, Lord of Dews!

Golden Drop (*with the mystic emphasis of euthanasia*):

A vision hath come to me,
me, dullest and lowest!
I cried: "Be not dumb to me.
Speak, speak, if Thou knowest!
What meaneth the mystery?
we brighten, we enkindle,
to a glory, sun-glistery—
yet minish and dwindle?"

And the Vision—It smiled on me,
so gentle and tender!
"Hang lovingly, my child, on me,
thy whole self surrender;
and lo, thou art part of me,
updrawn and upholden,
in the veriest heart of me,
azure and golden!"

(*The Dewdrops have listened in blissful elation to the vision.
They slowly vanish, by the drop of the Tableau Curtain.*)

SCENE XII. THE REQUIEM

*(The forepart of the stage is slowly heaped with petals that fall
as a snowstorm steadily to the end of the scene.)*

The Dewdrops *(unseen)* :

Ha, we are not!

Others be.

But when were we
ever we?

And yet are we not
at last,
upvanished
in the vast?

Ha, the past is
forgot!
The future
is not!

For the Now is,
alone!
The Unseen!
The Unknown!

Oh, blessed be
the Dew,
born ever
anew,

downfallen
to ascend:
no beginning,
no end!

Soul-quiet
in the strife!
Death-rapture—
and Life!

SCENE XIII. THE FAIRY QUEEN'S AFTERWORD

(The Tableau Curtain rises, disclosing the Fairy Queen with Fays and Fairies C. stage. Grouped about her are all the Characters of the drama, the Dewdrops being nearest her, in a circle. She comes down stage, slowly turning and waving her wand. All except the Dewdrops slowly pass out R. and L.)

Fairy Queen: Be any offended
 at aught here heard?
 Our Phantasy's ended;—
 yet hearken, one word!

(Chorus playfully hush one another, and all the characters on the stage.)

Dear folk, I would win you
this truth to believe:
the Dewdrops are in you
to your spirit they cleave.

Chorus *(quite drolly didactical, with much stress)*:
They are in you, ay, in you,
to your spirit they cleave.

Fairy Queen: I can see them atwinkle
 tho' you (of course) can't
I can hear—tinkle, tinkle!
 their crystalline chaunt.

Chorus *(with motions of eager listening)*:
We can hear—tinkle, tinkle,—
 their crystalline chaunt.

(The Dewdrops wave their arms in rhythmic motion.)

Fairy Queen: Ho, the Dew, how it dances,
 in heart and in mind;
 in smiles and in glances,
 now unseen, now divined!

(The Fays and Fairies follow the movements of the Queen.)

Fairy Queen: I am old, very old, yet
 I'm also a child;
 for my heart is not cold yet,
 nor my spirit defiled!

If the world tho' have hurt you,
I'll bestead and befriend.
See, this Pansy hath virtue
your playthings to mend!

*(The Queen holds out the pansy for all to view and the Chorus
mimick her motions.)*

And youth? youth? What is it?
but the will to receive
the day-dreams that visit
the soul,—and, believe!

CURTAIN.

SEWANEE LYRICS

AND KINDRED VERSE

THE REJECTED LOVER TO THE MOON

Dear Moon, so white, so swift,
that fliest from cloud to cloud
athwart each starry rift,—
how haughty and virgin-browed!
There clings about thy form
a circle of hallowed light.
It glides, and hides the swarm
of stars that would share thy flight.

Dear Moon, our hearts can ache,
or quiver with ecstasy.
Is thine too cold to break?
Too lonely in liberty?
No soul thy soul hath known
that lived to enrapture it?
For aye alone—alone—
athirst for the infinite?

The sky with clouds is strewn,
a sea with its isles asleep.
Thou sailest fast, dear Moon,—
thy love is across the deep!
But one whose life is wrecked
would rather believe thee cold,
unloving, unloved, erect—
a queen with her crown of gold!

"HASHISH"

I.

THE CHOICE

Oh, weary of the westering sun,
of deserts reaching far away,
of roses that sicken one by one,
of thorns that quicken day by day;
may others for wealth and for honors wish;—
I cherish the dreams of the sweet hashish!

Methought new light shone in those eyes
whose lovely gleams the soul entrance;
and, making richer seas and skies
with blisses bewitch her, glance for glance;
may others for kisses and love-looks wish;—
I cherish the dreams of the sweet hashish!

They vaunt the pleasures of the cup
wherein the purple wine is poured,—
the spirit riseth up and up—
God's fire in their eyes is; life hath soared
above the blue noon of hope and wish;—
I cherish more fondly the sweet hashish.

Some whisper of joys that blot all care
for them who love the Koran's lore;—
voluptuous hours soothe them there
where ecstasy sure is, evermore
in the swoon undying of will and wish—
I cherish the dreams of my sweet hashish.

II.

THE TRANCE

Meseemed, as on a silken couch I lay,
that all had melted in the far-away
where nothing but my heart and peace were found.
And there were perfumes drowsing all around
in visible waves of sweetness, and there stole
mysterious music thro' and thro' the soul,

till all was fresh and full of strength divine,
yet soothed to calm—such ecstasy was mine!
And as I lay I listened for those notes
quivering with tenderness, as tho' from throats
of nightingales among the full-leaved trees,
warbling athwart still amethystine seas.
And then medreamed, I was a beauteous Lake
sparkling for glory, whose smooth ripples break
in lines of light among the rushes dusk.

.

His bosom sheen unto the sky made bare—
He drew her downward to him debonair,
to mirroring deeps from her aerial height
in cloudy pure and azurous delight;
while leaving not her heavenly home above,
below She made him lovely with her love.

.

I was that Lake and mine its joyous thrill,
when over him in amorous self-will
the breeze blew orient bubble and pearly spray
to fairy foam in shimmery disarray.
I was that Lake whereon blithe sunbeams danced
in glassy stillness mazily entranced.
I was that Lake, and yet—he was not I.
Rapturous doubt! At once to live, and die:
tho' here, yet ever vaguely otherwhere,—
voluptuously aware and unaware.
Thus was I wooed and cradled to and fro
by dream-breathed beauty in listless ebb and flow:—
nebulous fancies hither drifted still,
nowhither bound;—an inexhaustible
river of conscious mystery and sheen,
silvery weird and sunnily serene,—
star-shine and lullaby and balmy bloom,
hush, zephyrous twilight, and evasive gloom.
And ever, all meseemed there was—was I. . . .
even I—without, afar,—within, and nigh.—

.

Lo, where my Lake among the rushes lay
lapping along his marge, softly asway
upon the rippling heave, methought I saw
a golden star in snows that never thaw,
yet ever in the brooding sunbeams shine:—
a Lily afloat—virginity divine
unvisited by messengers of love,
by honey-bee or breeze. The skies above,
the skies within the Lake, smile both on her.
My Lily openeth and her petals stir
as the white wings of some enamored Dove,
and flutter till the skies below, above,
tremble with gladness. As I gazed and gazed,
another filmy veil of dream was raised.
My Lily and Dove became an innocent Maid,
in naught but heaven-lent loveliness arrayed!
There unabashed she stood so childish-pure
and smiled, and waded deeper, insecure,
thrilling me with a sweet desireless joy;
even me, the Lake, wherewith her fingers toy
how delicately!—do I live or die?
I am her Lake, scarce knowing I am I!
She stoops, and lo, a Dove with rosy feet
is flown to settle lightly as is meet
upon her shoulder meek; and she replies
with grateful happy radiance from dark eyes,
caressing with flushed cheek the cooing Dove,
till laugh the heaven below, the heaven above!

III

THE WAKING

List! Woe is me—
sweet apparition stay, oh, stay,
bathe in that lake of my dreaming soul—
nestle dear Dove, in her bosom;—make whole
Ye pure and gentle, or utterly slay
the homesick and lost—woe's me!

Dreams!—broken dreams!
Where now is the golden, the living Lake?

Fainter and farther away it gleams—
melody, fragrance and quickening beams
a mist-like slow-fading illusion, forsake
my broken, my broken dreams!

Why, churlish world,
cruelly rush on the ravished brain?
Hast thou no awe of the heart, close-furled,
bliss-swathed—whose incense-fumes upcurled
flung on the wind of awakening pain,
vanish,—O hard, harsh world?

Dreams!—dearest dreams!
Why must ye die in a dream, less pure?
Waking we sleep, and asleep we awake
Maiden, and Dove, and opaline Lake?—
O would that your bliss could forever endure,
my dearest, my dear, dear dreams!

A FEBRUARY DAY IN TENNESSEE

I lie among the yellow grasses,
so tall and dry;
and, as I lie, a cloudlet passes
athwart the sky.

'Tis Hope alone as yet who dallies
from dell to dell,
and through the leafless garden-alleys
bids the buds swell.

But, as yon cloudlet fieth further,
evading view,
O where if ever, tell me, were there
such depths of blue!

Idly I snatch the wither'd grasses
by handful sheaves,
and twist them into arching masses
with shaggy eaves,

and lo! a gothic baptistery:
four arches keen
of sunny gold, and with the very
blue sky between!

And so, I fall a-dreaming sweetly
of One—God knows . . .
(how should I name her indiscreetly—
my dewy rose?)

Here have we been betroth'd and married,
and fast we fly
on wings of skyey genii carried,—
glad She and I.

Whither? Who asks in such still weather
if East or West?
So, Darling, we but fare together,
all ways be best!

What? but a day-dream? O dear grasses,—
alone, unwed?
I scan each cloudlet as it passes
high overhead . . .

bound for Love's mystical far Thule,
do they not seem?
O might I evermore—but truly
dream this one dream!

A RESPITE

Laughing I lay on a Summer's day,
bedded in blossoming grass;
and little, little did I think of Her!
Love is not all of life—alas!
'Would that it were,
'Would that it were!

Oh! that we could be but understood;
 bees must their honey amass
when skies are blue and grasses lightly stir.
 Love is not all of life—alas!
 'Would that it were,
 'Would that it were!

Selfish the soul that from love-dreams stole,
 watching the gay breeze pass
o'er ferns and flowers, but Oh! all things aver;
 Love is not all of life—alas!
 'Would that it were,
 'Would that it were!

IN VAIN

A passer-by, a passer-by,
 only a passer-by!
And I hoped to have thee always nigh,
to hear thee bid me live or die
for thee, for thee—but what was I?
 Only a passer-by.

An idle dream, an idle dream,
 only an idle dream!
For we meet to part, and when we seem
just near enough to kiss, the stream
will sweep us on, from dream to dream—
 Only an idle dream!

O bitterness of bitterness,
 bitterest bitterness!
That the heart should spend its tenderness,
and bless a heart that cannot bless,
and waste away, yet love no less—
 Bitterest bitterness!

CHERRY BLOOM

See! see the cherry-blossoms, spring's bee-laden snows
a-dancing on the merry breeze, in radiant orchard rows.

The robin, cheery red-breast, on the topmost spray,
is piping to the clear blue skies the rapture of the day.

The stream is trilling, grass-bound, filled full of silver showers,
impatient for the crocuses and summer's fragrant hours.

What soul is there could foster thoughts of sullen gloom
amid such joyous loveliness, such mirth of cherry-bloom?

Woe's me! a little maiden—no toys upon her bed,
her thin hands listless lying, and weary her drowsy head.

Among her yellow curls, scarce stirring in her breath,
shine gathered close the blossoms white, and this each blossom saith:—

“Upon thy snowy pillow, among thy yellow hair,
for thee we're waiting, Sister-soul, with thee our heaven
to share.

“Oh! tell us, Darling, longer, much longer need we stay?
an angel brought us here to thee; come fly, come fly away!”

And see! the blossoms flutter 'gainst the window-pane,
and see the blessed sunbeams fall in showers of golden rain,

and see the pale lips parted, smiling sweet in death—
as tho' an angel kissed her mouth and kissed away her
breath,

and hear the cheery robin, the streamlet's lilted lay,
and hear the wails and stifled sobs!—hush! hear a mother
pray!

The earth her lap prepareth, dreaming o'er the dead.
Soon periwinkles white and blue will cover a little bed.

NOX MYSTICA

Lo, the eager oaks their arms outfling
and capture a nook of the cool night sky
where thro' one star, like a startled thing,
peeps at our world as the clouds flit by.

The mocking-bird pipes thee a ditty, O star,
and spring's little leaves, astart with delight,
in the breeze to thy still blue home afar
like silvery birds are straining for flight.

Oh, our world it is lovely, and love here sweet,
and a joy spirit-sating this day-dream to live;
yet at times the brain throbs, and the pulses beat
as tho' heaven had withholden some gift it would give.

O star in beautiful peace afloat,
happy for fulness of scintillant mirth,
knowest thou—Thou from our passion remote—
what magic is lacking to enhalo the earth?

Or lacketh there naught save in me who complain,
who have sundered my heart from the bliss of the whole,
making 'mine' jar with 'thine,' and pleasure with pain,
and folly with wisdom, and body with soul?

O God, in a tract of soft still gloom
would I might burn like that star of thine—
filling with glory the infinite room,
shine on forever, and shine, and shine!

But the heart's prayer, fraught with ache of the sense,
it is not the soul's. Lo and hark, I have sinned.
For a mutter of thunder man knoweth not whence,
and the terrified leaves fold them tight in the wind!

Ah, rather than calm—for the truth would I yearn
for the truer on and on, the sore warfare within;
Ah, rather than joy in life's loveliness, learn
The lore of bereavement, of sorrow for sin.

Up in the cool clear sky, embrowed
of the shivering boughs a-drip with the rain,—
no change; but a vow of the spirit is vowed,
and sad is the loss, and sadder the gain.

For the mocking-bird pipeth no more as he lists,
and the little spring leaves hang down with the wet,
and the star—like a tear in God's eye—thro' thin mists
it trembleth—down-trembleth, and forever hath set.

THE SOUL'S SANCTUARY

How often from the soul
in silent starlit meditative moments
there wells a spring of tears,
that murmurs in our ears,
and brings back music, fragrance of dead years—
Love's radiant robberies and sweet bestowments,—
while faintly far-off bells of memory toll!

Then, in the twinkling net
of silver starbeams, are our senses tangled;
and eyes, long-dimmed for us,
grow kindly luminous,
and voices, silent long, sound tremulous—
so very near us, that our spirits, jangled,
to silver harmonies of heaven are set.

What then is wistful-worst
of those scarce bearable vague recollections?
The restless bitter thought
of love that came to naught?
of sympathy so needed, yet unsought,
which we withheld? of hoarded-up affections
that might have fed a soul and stilled its thirst?

O sacred impulses we quenched!
Our world receives, alas, too little kindness;
it hath such aching need,
so few its anguish heed,
its eyes that crave, its lips that dare not plead—
while full of joyous haste and selfish blindness,
the rich-in-love pass by with hands tight-clenched.

Nay, bitterer things there be
than sharp remorse for sympathy close-hidden!
The thought that side by side
we fared, yet dared to chide
whom most we might have heartened, had our pride
been of our better spirit to sweetness chidden;
and gone are they, and sadly wistful we!

Our lives re-echo still
to mourners' footsteps and to prayers ungranted.
Their altars—dark and cold!
Light-up sweet words untold,
kind deeds foregone, till the very dome of gold
glistens with stars, and the soul that sore hath panted
for hymns and service holy, have her fill!

UNDER THE STARS

Tell us, tell us, we beseech you
do You love us still?
Earth's mad cry,—speak, can it reach you
on heaven's shining hill?

O the Stars, lights of your city
burning in your streets,—
tell us, Friends, for old love's pity
if love's heart yet beats.

Far forever must we linger,
 hopelessly alone?
Point our way with spirit-finger
 to your Land unknown!

“ Not the old familiar places
 haunt we still for you;
Not in far-off starry spaces
 build we mansions new.

“ Now, ah, now we see and hear you,
 feel your joy and pain;
long to comfort, yearn to cheer you,
 counsel and sustain.

“ You it is who will not see us,
 will not hear and touch;
still withdraw and fear and flee us—
 lest we love too much?

“ Deep within you blooms the garden
 guirt of rivers four;
Strength and Troth and Faith and Pardon,
 brimming evermore.

“ Lo, the Tree of Life fast-rooting
 in the midst thereof,—
myriad-budding, myriad-fruited,
 miracles of Love.

“ Pomp of wealth, and proud achievement,
 fame vainglorious—
none hath solace for bereavement.
 Come within,—to Us!”

Tho' the stars, O dear Departed,
 twinkle and believe. . . .
We alas,—dull, heavy-hearted—
 doubt, and yearn, and grieve.

LOVE IN HEAVEN

My God, my God, what shall I say of Thee,
who madest man a marvel to himself?
Dumb, shall he gaze forever in Thy face
transfixed with wonderment and love of Thee?
Death into life—Thy smile is life and heaven!
Hate into love—Thy light obliterates all
that grows not infinite, divine and pure!
My God, my God, let me be always dumb!

Yet such annihilation is not meant
to be the close of this poor passion-hymn.
Thou wilt have service of us while we live
as well as worship, so we dare not die.
Somehow Thy love will temper for us then
the inconceivable splendor of Thy brow,
and soothe us with increasing sight of Thee
as holier we grow, and liker Thine.

Heaven is not meant to be the grave of man;
his love, if worthy of divine recall,
shall bloom once more, when he shall find sweet truth
in all the irrecoverable dreams
of time, but every one transfigured, raised
on higher throne, shot through and through with light.
O God, let earth for me be what Thou wilt,
more than I lose I find again in Thee!

Here thwarted, there consoled; here grieved to death,
there flooded with delirious holy joy;
here parted from the things we cherish most,
there welded into one with what we love;
eternal Selfhood, everlasting God!
unbounded Passion, rich unhindered Rest!
O Earth, I take thee! Heaven at length will come,
and She I lose be found more fair in God!

SONG AND COUNTERSONG

"When Love hath passed us by"

I.

SONG

The cornflowers thro' the wheat
beam sky-blue, and the poppies burn
in crimson joy; at every step we meet
some winsome petall'd friend from whom we learn
how fresh is life, and sweet!
Wherefore—the deeper sigh,
if Love, alas! if Love have passed us by!

Our life is not in vain?
The firmament hath stars for all
that flicker on; and every soul is fain
to know his own and scan them, lest they fall?
But pain, unmeasured pain
in tears may blot the sky
for some, alas! if Love have passed them by!

No good can life bequeathe;—
beauty abideth with the dead,
and falsehood maketh thick the air we breathe.
True hearts will not be lightly comforted!
Beneath the flowers, beneath
is rest! Who would not die
if Love, alas, if Love had passed him by?

II.

COUNTERSONG

The world is hard and heartless,
blind to the pure and good?
Its lusts unsated ever,
we drudges given for wage no thing we would?
And so for hopeless hope we sigh? . . .

And yet, ah, yet
why should one vainly fret,
aspire to aught, or aught of ill regret,
if he no angel of light have met—
if Love have passed him by?

Youth's ardent hopes extinguished,
ideals thrust aside—
marshalled in futile battle,
our faith down-cast, laid low our noble pride,—
that we may meekly learn to die?
And yet, ah, yet
Despair may strength beget;
angelic sword in hand, our face We set
against the dragon's guile and threat—
if Love have passed us by—
if Love have passed us by!

SYMPATHETIC MUSIC

Breath-seizing, irresistible delight!
O Singer sweet and pure,
beneath the dartling stars thy magic might
who could for long endure?

Those tensest strings to skill'd white fingers yield
their plaintive spirit-wails,
till half our sorest sorrowing is healed,
wafted to Dreamland vales:

trippings of children's rosy feet, light, gay,
down silver stairs of sound;
sobblings of love, unanswered, far away,
of yearning heavenward bound;

dark reachings for a music still more sweet,
with aching heart astrain;
delicious dyings at beloved feet—
intensest, dearest pain;

soft, soul-seducing harmonies that make
delirious fancies come,
and, ere their azure-wingèd flight they take,
with bliss the heart benumb;—
Oh! I have listen'd till the Past hath seem'd
chang'd in all bitter things;
till in the bitterness of bliss I dream'd
that love no sorrow brings.
Then notes fell thick in pearly rain, like tears,
and lay like gracious dew
Among the thirsting flow'rs—thought dead
long years—
and lo! they bloom'd anew!

DIRGE

(From "Love Conquereth")

Drift, drift away—
none knoweth whither bound.
Thy hand upon the river lay,
sweet Love, and stay its sound.
The water-lilies sleep,
the meadows dream,
the silver willows weep
beside the stream—
past, past the steeple in the twilight gray—
drift, drift away!
Flow, flow along,
thou deepening River, go
in silent majesty, thy song
sung under breath and slow.
The shores fast widen, fade,
and leave Thee free;
into the night flow unafraid,
into the sea—
far, far, to where the waves are long and strong—
flow, flow along!

CALLED FROM THE SHEEP-COTES

Love? I know him with his golden curls,
and his lustrous diadem of light
circling brows that glow, like some pure girl's,
with a purity all white.

Simple his garb, though knowing God's great choice,
serious ways that speak of high desires,
eyes uplifted, fervid tones of voice
sweeter than his quivering lyre's.

Shall I trust him when some later day,
sceptered, seated on his splendid throne
crowned a King—to be unchanged for aye,
just the same my soul hath known?

Will he then be generous and true,
still have eyes as mild and clear as now,
hand as gentle, firm, and open too,
when the crown hath bound his brow?

Ask not! Place in faith the precious crown—
place it proudly on his sacred head.
Having worn it, could he cast it down?
Leave his throne—through mire to tread?

PALMISTRY

Little hand, let me look at its lines—
I can read it, I know, to-day.
Let me hold it: too brightly it shines,
I must read it some other way.

Let me rivet it tightly to mine—
't is the same that last night I kissed.
Let them lie in your lap. I'll divine
palm to palm, thus, and wrist to wrist.

What I learn? I can't tell you. Your eyes
but repeat what the pulse just said:—
I have learn'd all I want, and am wise,—
and none shall know what I've read.

NOCTURNE

Evening hath come, mystery-fraught,
stilling the feverous pulses of thought.
Darling, I pray—often thou cheatest
Time of his minutes that silently fly—
sing me a song, sing me thy sweetest!
hearts will ache they know not why—
ache—I know not why.

Life is a void, lonely and black;
lasts but a moment the meteor's track;
all that we do, all that we suffer,
lost in the gloom of a desolate sky!
But for thy songs seas had been rougher—
sing then, Darling; sing, nor sigh
seeing daylight die!

Visions of strength, visions of peace,
visions of love when our sorrow shall cease;
visions of faith, visions of splendor,
all, indistinct, in the twilight flit by.
Give me thy hand, gentle and tender;
Darling, sing! . . . They all draw nigh—
sing, and heaven is nigh!

TWIN DEWDROPS

Twin rose-buds, side by side,
on each a ruby drop afire.
Longing for love in one to glide,
poor dewdrops! Who will bring them nigher?

Between, a chasm how deep!
The spears of grass below, how far!
Nay, can they risk the awful leap?
Befriend them, breeze! take star to star!

Alas, no wind will blow,
no help can come,—and love is pain!
Forth, must they, passion-burning, throw
their shivered light of love in vain?

Too rich to prize each gem,
(His sun looks down with greedy heat—)
hath God then need to pity them?
No more athwart the gap they greet.

Dear vanished drops of dew! . . .
What say ye? Have ye met, and kissed?
Ah! death at last united you;
God gathering both in one white mist?

FROST-WORK

'T was a chill, chill night, and my Love slept fast,
on her warm, soft couch asleep—
and a lovelorn glance at her bedside cast,
I did steal tiptoe to peep
thro' the moonlit window with woodbine hung,
which in spring blooms rich, but now
with its close-twin'd twigs, that their fretwork flung
on the panes, seem'd sad, somehow.

It was still. Th' tree-tops in their ice-mail shone,
and the ground crispt hard and keen,
and the stars got cold as the hours crept on,
and the tired moon drows'd between
indistinct blue hills. So I pray'd friend Frost,
as my soul breath'd warm good-bys,
for my own sweet Love, who in sleep lay lost,
to record Love's hallowed sighs.

Then I stole forth sure that she soon must know
how I watcht all night anear—
nor disturb'd glad dreams as the moon set slow,
and the stars droopt 'reft of cheer.
Ere the day dawn'd fully a sunbeam sought
from her eyelids sleep to shame—
for the hoar panes glisten'd where Frost's skill wrought
in a fern-frond wreath my name!

AFTER TEARS

When the rain-drops shiver in tree-tops high,
and glisten and twinkle, now crimson, now gold;
and the green grass glows as a star-strown sky,
whose webs are heavy with wealth untold;

with a glad quick chirp, or a sweet long cheep,
when birds have begun to flutter and hop;
and the bright twigs, startled from day-dreams deep,
in panic sudden, their treasures drop;

when at wayward intervals clear loud notes
go cleaving with gladness the hush of the air;
when, the rent clouds drifted away, earth floats
in sight of heaven—bid good-by to Care!

We will fling wide windows and doors—ask in
the breeze that is longing to visit us, Dear;
and the sweetheart blossoms that fain would win
(your honeysuckles) a welcome here!

Let us lean close, Darling! Let cheek touch cheek,
let hand be in hand as though never to part.
Let us breathe life's fulness—and no word speak—
just feel Love knitting us heart to heart!

A SEWANEE IDYL

Warm shone the sun. Airs rare and rich
to drink in deep, blew free and fresh;
for earth and sky did June bewitch,
bewildering spirit and flesh.

Like dawn-flushed clouds the azaleas rose:
like snowdrifts banked—their blossom-mounds.
What hum and drone and flutter and doze
and flurry of elfin rounds!

And all about, on tiptoe, stood
(unwitting lovers to espy)
wee blithesome gossips of the wood—
peaked ear and eager eye.

Winsome, tho' unabashed and pert,
some wagged, some winked, some nimbly leapt
o'er the curtseying grass when the sunbright skirt
foreby them breezily swept.

The path its golden miles unwound,
till sudden,—the rocky mountain-edge!
A spring quick-pattered, valley-bound,
from ferny ledge to ledge.

And far to plainward long they gazed
on checkered greens and browns forth-spread
to where bloom-ridges violet-hazed,
but never word they said.

And lo, beneath them, fathoms down,
there circled dots of living light
atwinkle now o'er green and brown,
now blurring out of sight.

They watched those happy whirling folk
in skies below their heavenlier earth,
till silence in light laughter broke
for happy-hearted mirth.

Oh, blessed long-gone summer days—
alone together—the quiver and hush
of noon—the wistful warm delays—
the thrill of hermit-thrush—

intimate converse, soul and soul,—
marvel of meanings yet unguessed, . . .
and unawares her shy hand stole
in his for breathless rest!

Close mystic look, all-hallowed touch,
and love's transfiguring first kiss,—
Ah, who may tell the tale of such
eternities of bliss?

Again and yet again they go
that self-same bloomy woodland way,
nor ever end shall either know
of that high holiday.

REPARTEE IN THE PARK

"Brush the cobwebs from my brain?"
No sir, thank you, no sir!
They would rouse far less disdain
dared you scan them closer.

See, the cobwebs on the grass?—
th' mossy cherub statue,
dewdrop-laden, as you pass
dartling starrily at you?

So the cobwebs in my brain
sparks of fancy spatter.—
What tho' wagtails waggle inane?
What tho' magpies chatter?

Cobwebs too be spun to snare
gnats that plague and pester?
Nay, Sir Schoolman, you we'd spare.
Ho for the May-queen's jester!

FIVE SONGS FROM "SIGURD"

I.

SIGURD'S PLEDGE

Up-leapeth the heart's desire
to westward, to seaward:
O Maid of the wavering fire,
to restward, to thee-ward!

To the bliss of love's infinite pain,
the anguish oblivion assuageth not,—
to the dregs the mystical wine

I drain,—
ever-living, human, divine
glorious woman that ageth not!

For of love is my heart fulfilled,
and to westward, to seaward,
fain would I fare forth, Brynhild,
to restward, to thee-ward!

II.

GRIMHILD'S ENCHANTMENT OF SIGURD

Out of the dark
climbeth the sun.
Hark, hark,
the night is done.
High leaps the lark,
and the heaven is won.

In the sweet-breathed morn
be flowers bedewed.
Love is reborn;
Hope is renewed,
and the soul hath foresworn
her solitude.

Who draweth near
for passion and mirth?
Shamefast her cheer,
and winsome her worth?
Behold she is here—
mere maiden of earth.

The spell is broke.
Thy woe hath fled.
And joy I invoke
on thy hallowed head.
Awake, as awoke
the day from the dead!

III.

THE SPELL SONG BY BRYNHILD'S HOLD

Hand in hand,
eye in eye,
together we stand
to live and to die.

Heart in heart,
soul in soul,—
weld part to part
in the holier whole!

Gunnar the swart,—
Sigurd the golden,—
to further or thwart
close-enfolden and holden.

Far, waxeth to nigh;
wont, waneth to strange.
I am thou, thou art I
in the awe of the change.

IV.

THE BALDUR DIRGE

Ah, the sweet young death—
tear-dewed as the rose,
yea, and fragrant of fame his wafted breath,
whiles the cool wind blows.

Seven days, seven nights
hath Baldur the Beautiful slept;
but none was found who hath power, woe's me,
to awake him!

Seven days, seven nights
a grievous watch we have kept.
Who in earth, who in heaven hath heart,—
so fair,—to forsake him?

Seven days, seven nights
have the Gods in Godhome wept,
or ere to the bale fire, with Nanda, his love,
they take him.

Ha, the broad, the free flare
of the dawn glow-barred!
Boughs leap to the light in the song-thrilled air.
Is Death cruel and hard?

V.

GUDRUN'S BLOOD-WITE

Hath Brynhild ravished my place
in the bale-fire's flames?
Yet 'tis I, even I, Gudrun shall efface
in blood our shames.

Lo, and hark! A Hunnish hall—
and for help men cry;
the walls thereof bow them, the gables down fall,
and in anguish—ye die!

The Niblung house, and the hoard,
our Kingfolk, and land:—
ashes and smoke before Sigurd my lord
for the bale-fire's brand!

Thine heart for naught didst thou pierce!
Shall He love thee the more—
or the storm that roareth pitiless, fierce,
with welter of gore?

A RIME OF THE WICKED BIRDS IN JUNE

My heart is light
with the joy of June,
light with the hopes of the morning.
Bright
was the night,
'and gay
the day.
So, comrades dear, take warning!

Slowly swells the mermaid-song,
languid movement, rich delight,—
grace and glory glide along,
rainbow-beauty, softly bright.
Ho! for a toss of the bacchant's locks!
arm in arm, and the dance-wave rocks:
soul with soul, we defy earth's sway—
a wing-beat strong
ere we float along
o'er waves that play
in golden day—
smile meets smile, while I (and She)
caught in a world of mermaid glee,
free on the rhythm to far realms flee,
where the spirit would stay
for aye!

Then, the dance was over, friends,
A gurgle of laughter breathless—
the sweetest of hours too early ends,
but the joy of the soul is deathless!

We slipped together
out of the hall,
and no one missed us
in the chatter of all.

Through aisles of elms
to silvery realms
that melted in heavenly vistas,
on, on we roamed
through the gloom of the trees,
where the fountain foamed
like magical seas
in the crystalline glare of the moon;
the flowers about us, fresh and sweet,
(expressly come
to be witnesses dumb
of human bliss complete)
nodded, I think,
and dared to wink.

Yet there we rested,
laughed and jested,
hoped that "the day would n't dawn too soon,"
peered at the "queer dear face of the moon,"
heard the fountain's tinkle and sputter,
heard the leaves in the full breeze flutter;
till cool, and scent, and young life's merriment
beguiled us to venture an odd experiment:
hand in hand, before we knew,—
lips found lips, though none had taught us.
Who was there but the moon to view
how Love in his sweet snare caught us?

A foot-step fell!
we rose in terror.
'T was nobody. Well?
An evident error.

Ashamed of what?

'T was Love's own plot.

Yet, mutely went we back,

the sky o'er-clouded, sullen and black.

And she left me alone

at the door of the hall;

with a cousin I hated

she flitted away,

away in the fated

crazed swirl of the fray.

Yes, left me alone

at the door of the hall!

not a look to atone

for desertion;

no call that was audible,

beck that was visible!

Motives, no doubt, if you heard her version,

maidenly motives most laudable—

but oh, my heart's plight

on that mad June night

seemed bitterly, bitterly risible!

But my moonlight queen—

was not

forgot.

What was it, oh, what

that had slipped between?

One kiss—the first

from the lips of a girl

that I got by theft not right—

was that what had curst

our poem of pearl,

eclipsing its silver-white light?

At length we met—

became good friends;

but no word of our night of June

as yet—

though who could believe
a soul might forget
that fountain's tinkle, that "queer dear moon"?
believe that love thus ends
mere "friends"?
that Love can perish so soon?

One day we strolled, a year from then
in the woods together,
dreamy again,
as still as the warm-cool weather.

The friars
of the wood's
imp-brotherhoods,
they stung me like briers
those gnomes of the woods;
till I fervently prayed
as we "gaed and gaed"
that her thoughts might be gone too far
to take note of the scoff
of the gnomes that would doff
their caps where the mad bells are;
how my blood danced, tingled
as their foolscaps jingled,
lest such mock-bows all might mar!

—"You will make my proud queen blush,
O gnomes!
Away, hide, hush
in your bowery homes!"

In vain, in vain I cried
and sighed.

—"You see?"—"You see?"—from the woods
it came.

—"Who?"—"Who?"—in a quavering tone replied.

—"She's fooling you!"—"She's fooling you!"

My hot heart burst aflame.

—"Too pure!"—"Too demure!"

—"Who? Will she be your . . .

"Your own, own Sweet?"

My agony grew.
—"She fooling you!"
—"Who?"—"Who?" they repeat:
—"She fooling you!"
—"Too true!"
they whistled,
—"Too true!"
—"We too!"

A pause! . . . I stole
a look at her face,
and saw her soul
with its angel grace.
—"Oh, will she be yours—
your own, own Sweet?"
—"Oh, will she be yours"—
that catch they repeat.

For my soul "too pure"—
yet who could endure
such agony longer
or stronger?

So I fell at her feet—
cried:—"Will . . . will you be
my own, own queen forever?"

—"You see?"—"You see?"
From the woodland green
how they mocked my cramped endeavor!

Yet the rest
were best
hushed tight
for aye;
since my heart is light
with the joy of June,
light with the bliss of living!

Bright
is the night,
and gay
the day.

And my heart
to the gnomes
of woodland homes
in part
I'll say,
is forgiving!

MOLLY, MAY, AND DOLLY UP THE GLEN

I.

Titter,
tinkle
down in a dusky cleft.
Glitter,
twinkle,
Shiver and sprinkle
diamond spray
to right or left
on the wind away
careless of loan and theft;
on flowers that assemble
for a chance
to dance
near the edges;
on fern-fronds that tremble
all day
in dismay
as they peep
down deep
steep
slippery vertiginous ledges.

II.

Now come,
be dumb.
Lie still in that pool
clear, quiet, and cool,
under arches of mountain laurel;

for each bloom is a bell
oddly stiff, without smell,
but of beautiful white or pink coral.

III.

Little Pool,
you 're coquettish
and prettily pettish,
freckled
with blotches of golden sun,
speckled
with bloomdust, foamy with fun.
Are you vain,
little Pool,
of your primness?
Explain,
little fool,
without playmate
how came it
you hid, little Pool,
in the cool,
little fool,
in the cool,
little Pool,
and the dimness?
For who 'll,
little Pool,
say who 'll,
little fool,
in this lonely glen
ever find you,
or when
he has found you out, mind you
and find you
again?
in the cool,
little Pool,

in the cool,
little fool,
in the cool,
little Pool,
and the dimness?

IV.

Wrinkled
with worry?
for whom, say whom?
The wind, in a flurry
was rough,
in a huff,
and sprinkled
your lap full of bloom?
The bushes were shaken,
the blossoms fell,—
and the wind has taken
a rude farewell?
Yes, the wind was rough,
in a pet, and a huff,
so
he shook
down
the blossoms, and look!
Down,
away goes a fleet
of blossomy ships,
that circle and meet
as the current slips;
Ho!
that's
where the gnats
go
cruising.
'T is Xerxes again
his millions of men
on the coasts of Attica losing!

V.

O the jolly
holi-
day!
Madcap Molly,
Dolly,
and May,
have completely forgot you
already
for the blossoms that dot you
and eddy,
little Pool,
in your waters cool.
I've an inkling—
unafraid,
in a twinkling,
they'll wade
and spatter
the spray
in their eyes;
and the fleet
of bloom
will retreat,
and make room,—
nay,
scatter
pell-
mell
if wise.

VI.

Not
a moment to lose.
Dresses tucked
up,
and shoes

on the spot
unlaced,
stockings stripped
in hot
haste,
willy-
nilly,
O me!
Courage plucked
up,
and dipped
are four sweet
little feet,
slap-dash
with a splash
in your waters clear, chilly,
to ankle and knee.

See . . .

The ships one and all
wheel away
in the spray,
where the fleet
of their foes
they meet
(who knows?)
or are wrecked
I expect,
at the fall.

VII.

Under the laurel
sits
Dolly—
stiff, prim,
at the sparkling water's brink:—
“It can't be moral,
it's
folly,

mad
whim,
bad
form to wade, I think
in a pool that's freckled
with blotches
of sun,
speckled
with bloomdust and foamy with fun."
So, under the laurel
Dolly
watches and watches
(while blossom-rains reckless
make her a necklace
of white and pink
coral)
and Molly
she watches,
and May she watches,
do—things that should never be done.

VIII.

On my word!
There's a bird
comes hop-hop to her side:—
"I'm eager, dear Madam,
to win me a bride,
as all men since Adam
of spirit and pride.
It surely won't hurt,
while May
and Molly
wade
for us two to flirt
in the gay
laurel-shade.
You are pretty,
Miss Dolly,—

I 'm witty
and pert:
so a marriage, I think,
might be made.
Water's my drink.
I dare
to assert
I am sober, fair-
minded and staid.
As I live,
I can't give
you, Miss Dolly, a ring;
but you know
I'm a beau,
and just hear how I sing.
I'm a catch—
for I snatch
with my beautiful bill
a worm!
(See him squirm.)
Come, Miss Doll, say 'I will,'
then I'll build you a nest
of the neatest and best,
and of worms I shall see that you have
your sweet fill."

She is playing, Aunt Bess,
so
I know
She'll say "Yes!!!"
I guess
she
is willing.

Sir
Robin is wooing.
(Don't stir.)
They are billing,—

see,
billing
and "cooing."

Ha, ha, but it's only the dream
Dolly dreamed in the laurel-shade.
And she's waked by a laughter scream
of Molly—poor lonely old maid!

IX.

"O dear
little Pool,
in the glen
clear,
cool—
O when
shall we
see
you again?
Freckled
with blotches of golden sun,
speckled
with bloomdust, foamy with fun.
You've made us so jolly,"
cry gay
May
and Molly.
"We're ever so glad that we've met you.
But who'll,
little Pool,
say who'll,
little fool,
with blossoming laurels around you,
O who'll,
little Pool,
who'll, who'll,
little fool,
forget you
who once has found you?"

X.

"No, we'll never, never forget you.
We are ever so happy we met you.

We've had
a good time
and will end
this Rime . . .

O the bad
wind, Miss Doll, to upset you!
But he did n't intend,
you know, to offend—
nor even to tease you or fret you.
And we both have to thank
you because on the bank
you watched our stockings and shoes.
But you're crosser and stiffer
than Aunt, when we differ
from some of her "proper views."

So Miss Dolly Dot
from France,
we dare n't coax or pet you;
and you're not
quite
polite
to refuse
thus
to excuse
us—

seeing only by chance
't is we've wet you!

HIGH IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES

A PHANTASY

*"Alas, the fancy cannot cheat so well,
As she is famed to do, deceiving Elf!"—KEATS.*

THE MOUNTAIN PARK

Ha! the little aspenwood
twinkling, merrily twinkling
in the golden sun;
with never a wiseacre inkling
there's aught in the world to be done:
for life—'t is so blessedly good
to a gleeful little aspenwood
twinkling, twinkling.

Ha! the madcap mountain brook
flashing, splashing uproarious
under blue spruce and pine;—
Forever the sun, victorious,
changeth water to sparkling wine;
so he drinketh in a dewy nook
of his own changed self, the 'brook,
drunken-glorious. . . .

Ha! the peaks of jagged rocks
skirted with granite drapery
of the landslide red,
scaled by the agile and tapery
forest which knoweth no dread
of th' tempest's glary locks
that enmantle the sunsmitten rocks
with splendors vapory!

II.

THE CABIN

And near the little aspenwood atwinkle, atwinkle
under the beetling crags,
by the brook with its hurdygurdy roars, its
sturdy, wordy brags,

its harmonic tinkle-tinkle
where it boisterously lags:

What clumps of the columbine,
scores and scores,—
each a stately fairy grove;
their fivefold horns of plenty, fashioned fine,
white
and mauve;
(Bells to peal the frolic pieties
of sunbright butterflies in bridal flight
to a dizzy azure height.)
What fragrant cyclamen, in moist societies
mossy-shod, purplish-crimson,
the water, aswirl, spray-spattering over-brims on!
What hosts cerulean of the penstemon arrayed
from the ruddy roots of the defiant
giant
pine,
up the slope in sun and shade;—
like a tract of clear noonsky it is,
reflected in a cool
grass-bordered pool.
What strawberry bloom hoar-frosts the ground,
to stretch the laggard limbs on,
while the soul reposes
in the balmy heat,
day-dreaming out an aerial Shelleyan song,
a sensuous Keatsian ode.
What bearberry bushes blossom-snowed;—
and everywhere brier roses,
heavenly-sweet,
brier-roses, brier-roses!

And near the little aspenwood atwinkle, atwinkle
under the beetling crags,
by the brook with its hurdygurdy roars, its
sturdy wordy brags,
its harmonic tinkle-tinkle
where it boisterously lags:

nestled in the coziest
of dingles,
where roses be the rosiest,
jaunty with green-stained shingles,
perks alone
the log cabin; its chimney of rude stone
since day
broke,
bannered gay
with turquoise smoke.
Yet, not alone, for the cows
with steaming muzzles, leisurely stray,
the while they browse
and look wise
as their world-old wont and use is;
and the crested mountain-jay,
a sapphire flash, screeching flies
to the twilight silver spruces;
and the rabble,
gobble-gabble
of the 'pies,
"The top of the morning" come officious
to wish us!
And the wrens, wee but bold,
on the eaves
(their sunrise song half sung,
anxious for their young)
at the chattering,
clattering
thieves
scold and scold;
till the cow that never worries
never hurries,
hooks the pasture gate wide open,
shaking loud her brazen bell,
and the speckled woodchuck pert
inquisitive, alert,
panic-stricken, hurries, scurries,

his hermit cell
to mope in,
for a spell—
till all be well!

And near the little aspenwood atwinkle, atwinkle
under the beetling crags
by the brook with its hurdygurdy roars, its
sturdy wordy brags,
its harmonic tinkle-tinkle
where it boisterously lags:

Lo and hark,
free from care and cark
the Children (invisible child-
wings
outspread
for flight,
like forest-bred
bright
wild
things
frollicking, rollicking!)
make-believe a gracious queen and jolly
king
hold revels,
whereto all airfolk be bidden
who fight red bogymen and green-eyed devils,
(in bogs,
like frogs,
in hollow logs,
in valley-fogs
hidden).
And the airy
reel they clasp and gasp in
among the aspen,
(fact and whimsical fancy jumbled)
on scary
nightmares is ridden:

wayward drollery
gay cajolery,
laughter outcries, dafter shrieks,
dancing eyes and flushed cheeks,
amber curls in the wind tumbled;
the while, upon the porch reclined,
their Mother lounges, heart and mind
in that far-off land
ever nigh at hand,
where friendly sprites
in sunbow vesture,
warble and flute your
blessed future,
with mimic gesture
and rare delights
for spirit-eye and mystic touch.
But the children, their orgy ended—
(Ah, she loves them so proudly much!)
have flown past her,
(fast and faster
the hill ascended),
pine and blue-spruce cones to gather;
till, their useful ardor spent,
they'll wade
in sun and shade,
and the pool's cold
crystalline surface over sand and pebble stones,
kick to yeasty sheeny lather;
and with handfuls of fool's gold—
their pretended
rage to vent—
pelt whatever rogue is
of the bogies
gruff enough to scowl and growl;—
the while their Mother dreams, dreams—
smiles and beams,
proudly, happily, blessedly content.

III.

SCHERZO

Ah, my Goddess, lounge and dream
beautiful, endued
with dignity and peace supreme,
in thy vasty solitude,

for I am soon, so soon, so soon
to be with thee;—and live
that hundredth blessed honeymoon
the fates have sworn to give.

Thou art as Isis veiled to all—
save one, miles, miles away.
Canst thou not, Goddess, hear him call?
Wilt answer if he pray?

Black wondrous eyes, remotely ashine,
reach to her worshippers.
Hands clasped beneath her head, are mine,
though ever divinely hers.

Lips vaguely smile, and dare demand
if tired I wax of life;
of life with her—you understand—
a Goddess for a wife!

O little twinkling aspenwood,
foot me a frantic fling,
to the brook's handclapping, be so good,
a swirling emerald ring!

And you, big, rhythmic spruces, hop,
wave fringed sleeves in time,
mock-ceremonious curtsies drop,
and the rocks like wild goats climb!

Hail down your cones, you bellowing pines,
your scraggly noddles wag,—
jerks, quirks, ventriloquous groans and whines,
in a Bacchic game of tag!

For she, our Goddess, asks—she, She
of the compelling eyes,—
if weary of life with her we be—
with her—and archly sighs!

Hark, the cowbell 't is the tuning-fork;
and cheerily the sky splits
from San Francisco to New York
in outrageous laughter fits.

With pyrotechnical display
the cloud-devils kick their heels,
and the mountains echo monstrously
panic, Titanic peals!

For we be weary of life, alas,
and chiefly of life with her;
to a better world we fain would pass;—
so, there (as here) she were!

IV.

BY THE BROOK

Today in your broidery, beautiful witch,
take not a cunning amorous stitch.

No broken needle, no tangled thread;
no poem or novel this noon may be read.

Away with the Brownings and Merediths!
not Morris, even, glad maker of myths.

Whitman and Ibsen their say have said,
and, like naughty children, are sent off to bed.

Down, down, to the brawly brook, methinks,
't were pleasant to stroll o'er the briery links.

The sweetness of scent, the soft underfoot,
each flowery patch in his own place put

for the dearest joy of the passing eye—
Down, down to the brook and ask not why,

where the silvery blue-spruces of violet shade
have for You a moss-paved privacy made.

Those superfluous garments (be sure, no loss)
will be stealthily laid on the velvety moss.

And lo! a holier power you wield
as in womanly grace you stand revealed.

The wind, loose masses of auburn hair
about your bosom will playfully flare.

Apocalypse rare—beheld of none
but you—and the seer—and the hallowing sun!

V.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

Ah, you fade
faint, far,
even as I look
into the night;—
only the evening star
sullenly smoulders,
grim, half-extinct,
upon the gruesome, fell,
uncanny lake,
where the murk waves break.

Lonely, afraid—
where are
the brawly brook,
the aspen light,

with many a battle-scar
the battered boulders,
the spruces close enlinked,—
and the Dian of the spell,
for whose dear sake
my senses and spirit ache?

VI.

"SO LONG!"

Hallucination?
Solitude,
ah, utter, utter . . .
Two thousand miles divide us;
and weeks, weeks, weeks
to yawn in, dawdle and foolishly yearn,
and of hope and fancy and guess
run daily the maudlin gamut. . . .

Come, resignation!
Fortitude!
Why murmur? mutter?
The fates do not deride us;
for the bland Stoic speaks
of discipline, lessons to learn,
perfection . . . yet, nevertheless
in very sincerity—damn it!

IMPROMPTU

To common Seekers—nothing but a drop
of water, shaken on a clover's head
of purple bloom, near which the sparrows hop
in glee that they are feather'd well, and fed;
to Roamers, there, at loving distance—stop!—
a tear of heaven, a star of holy dread—
And yet, the best is never seen, or said.

THE BOOK OF SYMBOLIC ODES

*"For whatever man doth long envisage
he transfigureth to human semblance,
hearkeneth oracles of his destiny
in river and wind and sea."*

"Man is still in his childhood.

*He has to imagine what the angels would say, so that his own
good impulses (which create those angels) may gain authority.*

*His moral life, to take shape at all, must appear to him in
fantastic symbols."*

SANTYANA: *Life of Reason.*

FOREWORD

Day by day I ask my question—
in every glance of my eyes it is;—
but never the Answer—no suggestion
of the mystery to me of mysteries.
You stars, you would tell me I am star?
and you trees,—that I am tree?
you clouds,—that I am all you are?
you seas,—that I am sea?
you mountain peaks,—that I am high?
you flats,—that I am low?
you sunny sky,—that such am I?
But still my soul saith "No!"

Alone at length my Self I face:
—"None knoweth but thou. Speak out!"
—"I am all that is. I am time and space,
thy faith I am—and thy doubt!
Tho' I am that I am; 't were truer
to say that—I am not yet:
the wooed, the wooing, the wooer—
creditor, debtor and debt.

"If still thou list to ask,
know, thine Answerer shall be dumb;
for, no word is his word, but a task—
a beauty thyself must become.
Yea, to know—is to be;—and alone
in being, must wisdom be sought.
What thou art—no more, may be known;
and the more?—thou shalt be,—or, is nought!"

THE LION

(An incident of the Zoological Garden of Cincinnati)

There, on the floor of thy cage
Thou liest, O Lion,
stretched out, indifferent!
Vast head, with weight of portentous mane—
a tangle as of autumn forests
where the horror of jaws
lurks in ambush;
compact muscular legs,
armed with death,
in which the lightning of the fatal leap,
the crack, the crash of the fall,
the rending of flesh yet alive,
slumber unquietly;
tail with suppressed lash
involuntarily vibrant;
through eyes half-shut
with cunning show of drowsiness
the yellow flash, keen,
like broken glitter in the moon-glare
of little pools of steaming blood;—
All, all betrays
subtly the soul of terror.
What outrage to have caged Thee!
Yet, in thy bars take comfort.
Proffers of freedom were insult—
scorn of the harmless, the impotent:

Men dread Thee!

But Thou—carest not if they quake,
requirest no flattery of fears,
sure of thy formidable strength,—
indifferent,
grand.

Ah, wherefore do we stop
in front of thy cage
bound by an evil spell?

Why this shudder at times
not of dread—this sense
of oppression, difficult breath,
unaccountable?

Whence this ache
of self-pity intense as we look
at Thee, fierce Brute,
caged Fiend of the wilderness,
at Thee?

Terrible! magnificent!

That leap, shaking the iron bars—
as reeds once by shrunk streams
where thy tongue of fire
lapped the cool;
the quick snakes of thy mane
erect, rigid,
quivering with wild might,
at the eruption of a roar,—
like fire volcanic
from bottomless deeps of fury
inflaming the sky,
charring the fruitful earth.

What is it
captive monster,
late so majestic, composed,
scornfully indolent?

A cub—set loose
for sport of children—
a cub, astonished, stares
in front of thy cage,
by neat-trimmed shrubbery—
free?

Who shall utter, O Lion,
thy stupor, agony, rage?
One of thy kind—a cub—free?
What?—The wilderness nigh?
This fetid cage of shame—hallucination?
Dens full of half-tame skulking beasts,
howls, whines, snarls of feeding time—
an obsession?
The day's peering merry-makers,
(cowards who inspect with prudent insolence,)—
and the prowl that ends where it began
in the close stench of the walled night—
a hideous obstinate nightmare?
Ah, 't is the Wilderness hath roused her to battle—
hath conquered civilization,
at a bound come hither
to rescue her caged King?
Iron bars only—between Him and—
not freedom—
but Her?
The hot day's sleep, the night's fierce hunt,
the fight to the death with rivals
for the lioness, sleek, awaiting the issue
with treacherous fawn, and leers
of savage pleasure?
Only these bars—between Him, and—
not freedom—
but life?—Life?

Magnificent Captive,
Disdainer of liberty,
do I not understand Thee?

Am not I, too, caged?

Laws, customs, courtesies, proprieties!

I too—remember.

Not liberty, oh, not liberty now!

Why break through bars?

Prolonged despair hath cowed us both,
and the tyranny of use.

What? Wreck our cage?

Where then would our Wilderness be?

The torrid sun,
the fever?

Hunger for palpitant flesh,
thirst for hot blood?

The icy night,
the blinding moon in the clear,
the shadows black of rock and tree?

The prey terrified,
the joy of his agony?

The antagonist's prowl, roar, ramp?

The ache, the bliss of omnipotent fierce life?

Only a minute the spell hath lasted—

best, O Lion, we both were patient,
spiritless, sleepy—sane!

May be, may be—

(the thought of it starts
a shudder like death's
clotting the heart's blood).

May be, may be—(who knows?)

only the semblance is left us
of fire

as of sunsets
that flare in the heavens,
but singe not a stubble straw
of the western hills.

May be—were the Wilderness here indeed,

thou, O Lion, and I—

even Thou, and I

were wanting.

THE OLD HEMLOCK

I.

Stout-hearted, great Hemlock, wast thou
foolhardy to plant thee on crags thus,
waterworn, naked —
tusks of some monstrous
jaw from the deep tarn jutting; —
no soil save mould of thine own shed spines,
amassed in the snaky folds of thy huge
roots, that to clamp thee steadfast
the splintering rock enwrap.

So soon as I saw, uncouth
black Giant, I loved thee; and oft
couched me solitary
dream whispers to overhear
of thy stalwart soul — but in vain.

Dragon-flies quick, emerald-glinting,
through swarms iridescent of dance-whirled gnats,
darted; or, sparkles of turkis fire,
settled gauze-winged on the moist stone a moment
in a fleck of sunny sheen.

From the dense
laurel-thicket the titmouse
furtively flitted, seeking the green
gloom of thy shade, perched him to pipe
twitter and trill tenderly soft
songs of thy praise, meant for no ear
but thine!

Or, perchance, as I waited
unseen, the fox-squirrels
inquisitive, mischievous, sprightly,
peered from their holes, cheeped, chirruped,
fretted, flurried, whisked-up their tails,
flirted from bough-end to bough-end,
scampering, scolding, scurrying,
in a dare-devil game of catch.

But ever, though affably tolerant, nay
gracious, Thou stoodest, thy spirit
methinks abode far

alone, aloof, aloft,
rapt in the beauty stern, inexorable, everlasting, true
of the positive world;
thy bliss
too real, intense,
for frivolous dance,
frolic and song, or worship devout
in irreverent foolish words.

II.

Stark gnarly branches,
spotted with lichen hoar, and shag-
bearded, already thy spirelike
symmetry mar;
but old age
fondly of the past reminiscent,
dotingly garrulous, yet
for many a year
will not touch thy spirit;
then, oh,
of friendship wilt thou not
tell one who loveth thee,
whether,
when at first from a cleft
in thy rock (than the cool
mosses that slipper thy feet, scarce
bolder of growth) thou didst peep
curiously skyward;
and after,
when the froward chokeberry bushes
that jostled and pressed thee,
proudly thou couldst
overpeer at length and outreach;
Whether, dear Tree,
in the drowsy noon-sun thou never,
didst day-dream, foolishly day-dream
of stretching, a benison mute,
thy hundred long-sleeved arms patriarchal, solemn,
over the tarn as now —
warden august of its peace?

For, irresistibly, hither
happy day-dreamers are drawn
to sit them down and muse,
in fancied fellowship close with thee,
of possible things that will not,
of things impossible
that must come, surely, to pass.

III.

Howbeit, — taciturn Sage,
noble, austere,—
the subtle fragrance inspiring
of thy forest-breath sweet;
Do not deep impulses stir in us
strangely, disrupting the arid
crust of our work-a-day self?
Resolutions spontaneously
well up, abundant and pure,
to refresh it and deck it with verdure
of hope?
And trust (like thine own,
sublime) in the universe, soar
overhead — a vast sky?
Our life-love,
ardent, out of darkness and cold
burst ablaze —
sunlike its azure
ascending?
And our baser desires shoot
upward till, scintillant points,
they dartle on our dark
hours of bewilderment
spiritual rays
heavenly impersonal, starry remote?
For lo! a Symbol, a Glyph of a lore
Thou art, which our spirit
unwittingly spells:
how Might,
Self-lordship, Soul-greatness,
are got of a wilful stand, reckless, unshaken,

in hard barren places;
 Ay, are got of savage war waged —
 brute man with stubborn things
 and forces undying and tireless — overcome
 to renew, (fierce, treacherous,
 cruel,) the strife;
 are got of uprearing sore-battered
 a crest, defiant to blast
 and bolt,—
 no fate dreaded but shame of cowering,
 doubt of the glory, and cavil
 at the absolute right of the Order
 eternal;
 are got of outspreading magnanimous arms abroad
 to shelter, benign,
 all that is guileless and true,
 lovely and glad;
 are got, O venerable Tree,
 of fixedly viewing as thou, (undaunted, though awed,)
 yon infinite expanse (terrific to puny
 folk centered in self, and vain)
 which floateth ever forever
 unconscious, calm, beautiful, holy,
 a myriad, myriad suns!
 Which, beholding long, thou hast meted
 justly thy height — found it naught,
 yet much;
 and foreknowing thy natural doom
 art complacent;
 too honest to feign
 craven and false comforts;
 nor minded,
 having taken to withhold; out of pride—
 eager to give and forgive!

IV.

Wherefore in vision prophetic Thou viewest,
 (storm felled, or thy grasp on the rock
 age-loosened) fallen,—idly float —

root-moored or wind-drifted—Thyself:—
 fostering, feeding
 with thy hardily-wrought fibre of life
 mosses and ferns, orchids and grass,
 parnassia with cups white and green
 quaint-carven of five petals;
 yea, chokeberry shrubs,
 thy earliest foes; honey-flowering
 azaleas, glossy-leaved laurels, rhododendrons
 tortuous-wooded, pompous-blooming;
 impartially kind to whate'er
 Faith sowed or wind's Whim
 to sprout, shoot, bud, and fruit,
 on Thee, their rich isle of the Blessed;
 with forbearance high-hearted, abiding
 patient the day,
 when water-soaked wholly
 in the long years, slow
 down Thou wilt sink —
 blissfully down —
 to delicious oblivion
 at last;
 deep in the cool depths of the tarn,
 which all thy life through thou didst love,
 heroic, godlike Tree!

THE RIME OF THE TARN

I.

Darling little Tarn, with the dark woods girt,
 high up the steep old mount,
 solitary, kithless; winsome, waggish, pert;
 for thy bonny tricky air
 where's the moralist would dare
 give account?
 Since thou never didest act
 altruistic,

and thy nature ne'er was rackt
with regrets, or passions mystic;
unworried by the woes
of the world,
lying cuddled up and curl'd
blithe, jocose,
without faith or fealty, quite
unaware of wrong and right;—
Nay, so frivolous and gay
as to dance all day,
yea,
and the whole night thro'
too;—
For, whoso will may hark,
and, envying, hear thee mark
with lapping lightsome laughters
mad-cap time;
ignorant of bygones, incurious of hereafters,
in wily happy innocence sublime!

II.

Darling little Tarn in the forested wilds,
assuredly thy heart is a child's, a child's —
irresponsible and vital,—
giving, when it gives,
without reck of requital;
taking, while it lives,
what it wants.
Yea, free as the breeze's,
its favors and its taunts;
it teases
whom it pleases,
whom it likes, heart-whole,
will caress and cajole.
Yet when hath it behaved
in thought, in word,
in deed
(though all theories were waived
of morals bad and good)

otherwise —

than as a tarn under deep blue skies
midmost of a dense old wood
should?

III.

Is thy virtue unpretentious,
be thy principles less strict,
because thou wast not e'er licentious
nor by tempter's logic trickt?

And therefore seest no merit, eh,
in reasonless austerity?

But if any have good right
to preach and proselyte,
if any might convert
bad sinners and worse saints
from wicked ways they're us'd to,
it is Thou, little Tarn, brisk, nimble and alert,
who, requiring no restraints,
mightst commend them sans suspicion,
shouldst thou choose to.

Ah, thou dost not, wilt not heed,
thy "serious call" and mission,
nor the world's bewildering need
of some brand-new creed.

Thou art, dear Tarn, thou "art,"
and lo, it sufficeth thee;
let Such as "have been" moralize,
or Such as are "yet to be!"

Then, oh, if mortals could but master
the mystery, little Tarn, of thy moods!

For the noblest,—courageous in achievement,
bereavement,
disaster,—
lose buoyance
of soul,
self-control,
at the daily-hatch'd broods
of annoyance;

the fret
vexation,
irritation,
petty trifles beget!

And methinks,—as I see thee lie
rippling,
contentedly tipling
(as tho' a flood
sunkisst
thy supply
to renew)

the dew
of the morning mist
on leaftip condensed,
on spine, grass-spear, frond, berry and bud—
thy complacence
comes of doing none obeisance,
beholden
unto none,
not even the golden
Sun!

For, Thou askest no brook
to come yodling and whooping
and cheer thee,
or drooping
uprear thee;

no rillet in ferny nook,
(pretty lisper,)
to whisper
soft names that endear thee,

go tickling
the mosses, run trickling
to clear thee.

And when storm-racks rain-sagging
scowling, bullying, bragging
roar
o'er
the lowlands that flatten
on the weather god's favor to fatten;

thou flauntest thy blossomy rich array
near to the mountain's top
with a dainty insolent witchery,
unwilling to beg thee a drop!

And why? In the deeps of Thee well-up
bubbly springs of perennial jollity;
whereat, on the sly, thou quaffest,
winkest
saucily, thinkest
some naughty thought, blinkest
and then —
laughest, and drinkest
again!

Howbeit, when in winter the summit
savage cloud-hordes envelop—
dost thou sing it, or hum it
thy tune of delight,
in defiance
of the Giants
and their ice-hearted might?

Nay! No swaggerer, churlish brawler,—
thou'rt no blusterer, and bawler;
but seemlier far,
with the better part of valor — discretion —
thou meetest
and defeatest
oppression!

For so soon as ruffian winds come forth
of the North
wielding the sleet-lash to scar,
driving flurries
before them of snows —
(worries
and woes
to provoke thee
willy-nilly
and choke thee)
little Tarn, still stilly
a smooth shiny sheet

thou dost over thee draw
 from sweet head to sweet feet:
 and whilst rifled
 of its leaves,
 stifled
 in drifts,
 the from forest aches,
 heaves,
 grieves, and uplifts
 its arms, with cruel icicles weighted,
 to the hated
 North-demons for ruth;
 How the robins and I do wish us
 with Thee in thine inviolate dream-Eden,
 where the Tree-of-life grows
 for fancies to rest
 and nest,
 sing, feed and breed in;
 and the Fount of youth
 inexhaustible flows
 in four rivers of crystalline cheer!
 But lo! When the spring-sun breaks
 thro' the welkin, and warm winds thaw
 about thee the missiles malicious
 of the storm and the gale,—
 my wise Tarn 'wakes
 in good sooth;
 and waters Thou hast to avail
 for the year,
 got without money or price
 from thy jolly fool's-paradise!
 Surely thy doctrine with tact is
 taught by thy practice:—
 in days of dearth
 self-supplied
 Bride
 of mirth;—
 in days of distress,
 hid away in the deep
 blessèd recesses of sleep!

IV.

No marvel the oaks, stout blast-fighters,— mail-clad
 trunk, limb, bough, in lichen; the stark black birches
 waving delicate fresh volumes of greenery;
 the chestnuts rough-barkt, bluff and burly
 up-thrusters
 in yellow-green clusters
 of burs; the hemlocks, late and early
 on guard o'er the gracious scenery,
 grim, glum, sullen, surly,—
 yet kind
 to the wintering birds, who find,
 in their spiny dark, safe homes;
 the service-trees scrubby and gaunt
 that dangle,
 begrudged, their few pitiful pomes
 under foliage bluish, wizen and scant;
 the rhododendrons whose firm gnarly wood,
 aslant
 in snaky tangle,
 shows how arduous (tho' they rant
 not, nor wrangle
 as we),
 even 'mong tree-folk and shrub-folk the search is
 for Light—
 each with his bad
 and his good,
 his record of wrong and of right—
 come marshall'd in deep ranks close-serried
 to take solace in Thee, the Light-hearted,
 the glad!

V.

No marvel the jaunty-fronded rowan,
 bronze-berried
 at first, then aflash
 with sumptuous carmine,
 which, prodigal, he tosses
 to the winds with a fling and a dash;

the hobble-bush lusty, astrain to display
his flame-color'd drupes
in rivalry futile; the slender
merry
wild-cherry,
his spring-radiance departed,
retaining yet a tender
subtle grace of his own;

the marrish-maple, whose mere poise, airy,
unwary,
there's charm in,
and comeliness, dancing alway,
impatient to don frory
glory;

the highland-holly, that to-waterward stoops
and a covert overbow'rs
with lucent ruby fruit
bejewel'd; the laurel, wayward, rash
that leaps from his root
whilst, in lieu of his long-shed waxen flow'rs,
every leaf of him agloss is
with sallies of sunshine; the modest azalea,
unqueen'd for the season, to the sorrow of mid-June
having cast off too soon
her orange, or white-and-rosy regalia;
the green-brier belated, and inquisitive to boot,
that in prickly-
tickly
festoon
o'er his fellows goes tumbling pell-
mell;

No marvel at all if they throng
at thy margins,
each pressing his suit
for one boon:—

a first and a last sight of Thee
who art free,
gay
as they:

who grantest great largess,
yet makest no debtors
(since to all, what is thine doth belong)
allowing no inferiors, no betters,—
preferring not these unto those
in thy childish millennial polity;
because ever a jest
sets the worst and the best
at one in the throes
of true jollity!

VI.

No marvel, dear Tarn, thou canst cause
the dead trees on thy surface afloat
to nourish
such wild-flowers as flourish
not elsewhere so fair or so dense —
(frolic mummers
in the summer's
lush pageant, to thy playful applause
enacted,) — for note: —
the neighborly masses
of bugle-weed shaking their knots
of silvery bloom-dots
on the least little breezy pretense;
and the zephyrous tassel'd swamp-grasses,
and fretted ferns in narrow room shut,
whom the rank rabbit-root, (adept
in rudeness,) with his new-got black berry astrut,
tries to jostle;
that droll tiny fellow
(dwarf of St. John's-wort yclept)
who, to honor his namesake apostle,
starrily decks
his crown with wee specks
golden-yellow;
and greenwood orchis with dare-devil air,
and highborn parnassia of her style half aware;

O, how in thy waggish society
stern
Death,
dear Tarn, doth learn
to laugh at himself under breath
in a cantless, new, beautiful piety,
even gruesome, cross, scarecrow old Death!

VII.

No wonder if the Sun from his high
sky-

mansion, sends rays of his fire
white-hot, to drench
them, and quench
their thirst, with thy stored
hoard
of purity,
cool!

No wonder the Moon should draw
mistily nigh
wistfully nigher,
when scarce-fledged lovers feel
at thought of their blissful futurity
(sweet fool with sweet fool)
on thy bosom together, strange awe
as Thou dancest thine elvish reel:

diamond sparkle,
quick glint, phosphorescent
quicker
flicker,
iridescent
opal shimmer,
quiescent,
deliquescent
dim, dimmer
gleam and glimmer—
and darkle!

No wonder the Stars as they peep
through the cirrous dome

from the deep
of infinite space,
their home,
fondle thy fresh still face
without wrinkle,
and mirror in Thee their heavenly twinkle;
No wonder the Thunder-fiend perched on the peak
howling,
growling
to wreak
his pent might,
flings a steely white lightning to smite thee
and affright thee,
and roars out for boyish delight
at the blinding blaze
of thy swift indignant amaze,
his vicious ill-humor quite
gone.

No marvel that the Dawn
ere the least
first streak
in the East,
that betokens earth's yearning,
broadens, corruscates and flares—
(the path of the Sun-lord's returning
to strew opulently with auroral
floral
splendors,)

ay, no marvel that the Dawn
doth lavish alone on thee
her first faint most orient hues
to enkindle the haze
of thy grays,
or thy satiny blues
to suffuse,—
hallowing thee unawares
frivolous tho' thou be,

Thee, little Tarn in the mountainous wild,—
that dost make thee Olympian mirth
of men's notions of fitness

and worth,
immortal sure Witness
to the truth
and the youth
of the earth;
thy soul unafraid,
undefiled,—
forever a Maid
unfading, unplight—
forever and aye
at play,
an innocent Child,
and a sprite!

THE DEFILED MOUNTAIN TORRENT

I.

Cloudily wing'd, forest-man'd, side by side
o'er the green-and-yellow checker of tillage
alluvial, and the hummocky fallows copse-mottled, asprawl
in the sun and abask,—unwieldily
approximating their contorted ridg'd bulk,—
in the shelter of their scarpt flanks
the Mountains
a seclusion inviolable create
for some blessed cool Glen to lurk in,
from the rays of torrid noons fended,
and the irruption of hurricanes
malign.
Some Rivulet, indubitably, in his infantile
innocence disporteth him, rollicking
from clear pool to clear pool;
and gleesomely
loitering in his eddies
he chuckles to himself at the play
of the silver-sheeny trout, rosy-speckled.

And, oh,
 'twixt these imminent declivities
 with underbrush bristling, by the rank
 lush verdure close-thatcht,
what abode
 for the bob-white dainty-stepping, and the grouse
 bronze-rufft, with fife and with drum,
 to foregather and revel it in security,
 life-lusty;
and here, too, timorous fugitive,
 can the cotton-tail claim sanctuary,
 and the hazards forgetting of existence one instant
 frisk wantonly, or nibble at ease.

For with what bountiful supply
doth not hospitably the Glen her visitors entertain;
 herbs aromatic, spicy-nutrient roots,
 and berries in succulent luscious plenty
 divers-flavor'd, sweet and tart, to each taste!

II.

On, on will I hasten, yet discreetly
 sure-footed, and circumspect, that, by the timidest
 denizen undetected,
I may penetrate into the privacies
 sacred erstwhile
 to the horn'd and hoof'd goat-thighed God Pan;
and, (tho' it was rumor'd
 that from earth He be departed,
 to reside in the Olympus snow-capt
of Mythology, scared by the scowl of lean-featur'd
Science) devoutly, his blithe choristers,
of manifold wild minstrelsy,
will, I hope, have outstayed him:—
 first and foremost, the wee wood-sprite, shy and saucy—
 thro' the bracken afit, or dartling
 some mossy-carpeted log along—
 the winsome winter-wren. O might I but surprise him
 at his hyper-riotous up-bubble of mirth!

Or if not him, then, eavesdropping,
 the dusky-green vireo overhear,
 as solitary he setteth him to rebuke
 with a vivacious virile vocalism the querulously
 iterant soft plaint of the peewee,
 perverse shadow-haunter, in woodland mazes sun-proof;
 or, (oh, supreme unanticipated delight!)
 transfixt with a thrill of surprise—
 stand and hearken (as if pain, age and death
 concern'd us not ever) the hymn
 of love's true-mated hermit—th' tiny thrush:
 a peace superlunary, archangelical, divine,
 into melody molten, cool, diaphanous,
 soul-uplifting to a jubilant content.

III.

O pugnacious spiky locusts, cross brambles,
 briers choleric and churlish, wicked virulent
 nettles, coarse tight-tangling grasses,—
 less obstreperously might ye I believe
 withstand one that forward thro' your thickest
 pressest with no malevolent intent;
 for soonest exultingly my heart beats
 when nigh me some relative of mine—queer, canny
 fifth cousin, say, or sixth—unconstrain'd
 in bush, brake, water, air,
 I may watch at his frolicsome gambols,
 or the serious avocations of his life.
 Never fancied I
 glory could be gotten in the slaughter
 of a terrorized brother, outwitted,
 worsted in a conflict unscrupulously unequal.

Come, come,
 be ye civil to a friend who hath given you
 the password, and we will let bygones be bygones,
 my irascible stout fellows, as I slip me
 quietly atiptoe thro' your belligerent throng motley.

For I swear

O outposts over-zealous of the Glen,
unharm'd, nay, unthreaten'd, shall they be
all my kindred, feathery, furry, or finn'd—
the lords hereditary of your fortified
recesses.

IV.

What? Hist! On the wind—

is it a cry? Nay, a brawl rather and a bellow,
a roar—a thunder-burst of waters!

The Glen

I foreknew (from excessive sun-ardors by hemlocks
umbrageous, and adventurous birches
leafily screen'd);

ay, the Glen meandering
scathless and free among huge
crags by some cataclysmical upheaval of the earth
asunder-cloven, wrencht, shatter'd, jamm'd
in ages prehuman:—

cliff-walls

whose least ledges cracks and crevices by rash ferns,
vertiginously aquiver, are tenanted,—
or by shrubbery gorgeous-blooming,
and by intricate viney entanglements
precipitately down-tumbling, that athwart
the chasm green arms wavy and hands
amicable, extended to one another in impetuous
felicitations, at the faintest whiff of air,
almost touch;

O, the Glen

so bewilderingly beautiful, labyrinthine, sequester'd,
(strange, strange!) is not the happy
channel, as I imagin'd it, of a brooklet splash-plashing
bubble-babble, sing-song, in excess—
aspatter and aspirtle—of delighted limpidity;

but instead—

a rocky-barr'd keep, subterranean
kennel, for some Leviathan terrific—

dementedly pounding in self-annihilatory desperation,
up-panting a convulsive dank blast
demoniacal, to set the vasty scar-fastnesses
ashudder from the bottom to the top!

V.

Best-lov'd, first-Begotten of the sky,
foster-child of the mountain,
what is it with impunity doth afflict thee?
Thee, who the very hemlocks wouldst—enormous,
majestical,—deracinate in a trice
and voluminously overwhelm them,
resisted they thy thoroughfaring;
O Thou
who the rugged adamantine granite grindest
with the pulses of thine onslaught spasmodic
and the unintermittent wash swift
of multitudinous swirling waters;
O Thou,
tho' utterly thou scornest to be commiserated—
speak, speak!
For, notwithstanding
thou tосsest yonder downfallen giant bole
sore-batter'd of a sycamore,
frivolously, as a mere flocculent
scum-raglet; and, at his antics uncouth
(when frantical, for some stay, clutching, he writhes,
lurches and lumbers down thy rapids) inebriate
with wrath, dost into laughter vindictive
break hideously;—
Nevertheless yet
there abideth in the occult deeps of man
a spirit that, insurgent, mightily to thee-ward
yearneth.
Then, oh, utter
I supplicate, nay adjure thee, thine innermost
rancor incommunicable!
For wrong'd, wrong'd,
yea, wrong'd art Thou if aright

the tremulous overtone I interpret, and the mutterings—
unpremeditated, inadvertent, mysterious,
abysmical—that perturb
with a panic the hearer;
those wails, sobs
pitifully human, half-suppress'd, yet thro' the din
audible in a ghostly suspiration,
as Thou rumblest,
and from rock-level to rock-level
down precipice after precipice
crashest in cataracts horridous, suicidal,
lacerating thee to grisly froth-shreds,
and soul-seething, Thou hissest and up-spewest
haggard, awful,
an insensate contempt of Thyself!

VI.

Behold, for a space farther forth
the ravine wide-yawns and admitteth
the sun to irradiate thee with diamantine
splashes of living splendor.

Quick thither
am I wending through close-twisting masses
of blossomy laurel, over root-claspt rocks,
moist and slippery, about trunks
of hemlocks colossal, and there,
quieted for an instant, may thine ire
get articulate expression.

What meaneth it?

Speak! Assuredly,—an ocular illusion? in the shine
thy swollen floods effervescent whirl
golden, and regurgitate bronze-umbery,
russet-shimmering in the distance?

Too well

have I understood thee now, Thee
and thy dire speech—O Thou,
who hadst dedicated thy Self—
to maintain thee unpolluted the purity of thy origin,

and the rivers, whereunto thou shalt be tributary,
so much as in thee lieth with thy crystalline
onrush to clarify,
and the ocean's
brackish wallow and welter, if it were possible,
to sweeten with thy savor
of sky—

- O Thou, Thou even, Thou also hast altogether forfeited
thy hyaline pellucidity, befoul'd—
turbid, yea, maculate! maculate!
And as a nightmare again
horrifies, remember'd,
lo, the Mill
that bestrode thee intercurrent
between slopes once thick-wooded—where before me
it squats, as when I quicken'd my pace
endeavoring not to see or hear aught:—
the loathsome canker-Monster omnivorously
ravaging into the sacred dense evergreen gloom.
And mine ears, in despite of me, the shrill
shrieks of the steam-whistle affray; and the screech
and the howl of the rotatory saws terminating
in a raucous death-rattle and fierce
rasp; and the wheezy respiration of the engines
rust-pockt; and the clatter interminable
of shingles and plank.
What scragg'd piles
of stript tanbark beetle and totter akimbo! What mounds
funereal of sallow saw-dust, wind-fretted, thy gorge
choke-up, and throttle to strangulation!
Obsess'd am I by the groans of timber-loaded
waned, lashes of the whip-thong, and the strain
intolerable of starv'd mutilated
brute flesh—blood, sweat, obscene jest
and profanity!
- O Brother, spare me thy reproach, for too keen
mine abhorrence of the desecration that hath been
committed
by greed-craz'd human kinsfolk I disown—
(no fellows they of mine!)

Yea, yea I saw them—
 and still see them in memory,—those archways
 gothic-pointed of laurel, demolisht by fiend-fires:
 black skeletons that convulsive coil and crook them
 in a drunken death-dance; and the soil, see,
 charr'd, to an aching waste lye-bitten,
 where it gapes sunward, ghastlily!

And within me
 my spirit groaneth, outrag'd
 at the fatuous devastation of the Earth—
 our long-suffering Mother—
 humiliated, sacrilegiously defil'd
 by the very children of her heaven-hallow'd womb!

VII.

Woe, woe is me—not unseldom,
 O Torrent of savage sorrow unassuageable,
 was I madden'd with thy phrenzy ere this—
 fanatical, at thought of the despoilers, the deflowerers,
 the devastators! Nor thou only
 hadst to suffer contamination, and of miscreants
 the cynical unconcern.

If it listeth thee,—inveigh,
 and the turbulence of thy distress ease,
 by imprecatory bursts of vehemence—
 ineffectual, alas!

Ejaculate, O ejaculate,
 in the paroxysms of delirium, thine anathemas;
 and I will abase me, shamefast
 in thy presence, to hearken:

“Man, Man,”
 thou criest out with voice of great grief
 unsubduable yet chasten'd, transmuted
 to rage prophetic:

“Man, Man,
 whom for æons on æons
 We of the ancients order elemental,
 rapturously expectant, did adore;

instantaneous his insight and unerring,
 omnipotent the pressure,
 unimaginable the dexterity of his miracle-working hands;
 Man, Man, magnanimous (woe, woe!)
 we had imagin'd him, lofty-tempered:
 Mind, discerning of the Process creative
 the implicate ends; supreme
 Will, by glad godly indefatigable labors
 fashioning into a reality of unillusory
 loveliness, our vision long-worshipt
 of the world;
 Man, Man . . .
 and oh, lo!—he hath appear'd—
 and we have beholden him: no divinity
 but a Demon—tempter, torturer, corrupter—
 no law venerated that prohibiteth
 a gratification instantaneous of his glutton
 craz'd desires;—
 Man, Man—
 oppressor without scruple of the weaponless
 and confiding;
 extirpator of the formidable
 frank-hearted, noble-spirited, that stoop them not
 to be yokt and made vile;
 sparing only
 that thenceforward thy soul
 may in orgic massacres delight itself;
 vandal-violator
 of beauty wrought solemnly thro' the centuries
 and slow, for Thee, ingrate, to marvel at
 and rejoice in;
 O Man!—
 forever must thy tyranny
 be irresponsible to reason, right, ultimate
 self-interest?
 Wilt thou persist,
 in the ruin,—maniacal ravager,—of thy heritage—
 the one star of thy birthright?
 Dost thou dread not
 the degeneracy of thine imperial

breed, and at naught settest thy destiny
 of Godhood?
 No premonitory misgivings,
 ere yet it be too late, wilt thou give ear to?
 And wilt then dare in after ages,
 (Fool! Fool!)
 when self-doom'd thou art perishing,
 at the mirth-twinkling heavens to vent thee
 in maledictions preposterous, because—
 the old bosom forsooth, scarr'd, bruis'd,
 gore-bedaubed, of thy Mother
 will not foster more, and rear as of old,
 thy pullulent generations—
 the Mother
 (loving, responsive to her offspring
 until cold at the last, stark, dead),
 of Thee, slain—blind, ruthless, false Son!"

VIII.

Sad Misanthropist sublime,
 comfort thee, comfort thee—
 for high
 above thy final leap and lunge,
 horrific, into the chasm,
 forever vortically to engulf thee from sight
 of thyself and the dizzy-swaying sun,—
 Canst thou see not how a bare bough
 intrepidly thy spray-cloud
 overreaches, and the arching prism-splendors
 that environ and enaureole thy hoar stormy-lockt
 head calamitous?—
 Behold (if but a moment
 thou wilt allow thee to be distracted
 from thine anguish) how a Bird
 percheth him on the lichen-hair'd
 tipmost twig—
 (what, dost thou recognize not
 thy well-wisher?) brown-speckled, buff-breasted,
 rufous-green—wing and tail!

'Tis, O Joy!

the Swamp-angel, the diminutive Throstle
of the solitude—

and to capture thy notice,

thro' the vibrating azure,

in quick loops aerial, he wingeth him,

and returneth undaunted again

his word of consolation to deliver—for see, see!—

he warbleth now some dithyramb unimpassionately

voluble—a pæan of victory 'tis, spiritual,

for thy hearing;

and the strains,

in the boom of thine uproar inaudible,

my heart echoeth:—

“Hark, hark,

wert Thou still uncontaminate as erst

(O mountain Torrent,—hearken, hearken,

and take comfort!)—not so dazzling were

the whiteness of thy bubbly foam;

nor thy spray-mists,

wind-agitated, were fret elusively

with such palpitant sun-glories;

nor overspun with vivid frostwork

so lacily werè thy cataracts, evermore

spiriting sparkles, and outfrying into trceries

iridescent of spume;

nor so ferocious —

verily, verily—were

thy denunciations hurl'd at Evil, earthshaking,

hoarse-reverberant under hollowed-out

silvery-oozing and dribbling mosst scars;

nor would gusts so irresistible set adance

the leafage on the tree-tops, in jubilation

that they hang beyond reach utterly

of all soilure;

Nor were the flaming sunflower,

and, fragrant, the raspberries with their wild-rose bloom

purple, and the constellated aster

yellow-cor'd, lavender or milky petall'd,—

thus regally invested, transfigur'd
with such crystalline, rainbow radiant array;
Nor below, where forespent
thou tarriest a while gasping
for wrath-respite, and thy anarchical
yeasty turmoil out-smoothens to an ominous
glassy glare,—
wouldst Thou spread
so burnished a mirror as now
(of thy very swarthinness clearer)
for sun, stars, luminous clouds and the ardent
firmamental still blue!"

IX.

Comfort thee, comfort thee
implacable defil'd Torrent,
for thy Consoler
carolleth, still carolleth,
the transparency thou shalt yet achieve thee
of thy purificatory fury
at pollution.
Thine, thine
(so he singeth faith-exuberant)
shall a virgin Immaculacy
more miraculous than erst be;
and brave-soul'd shalt thou bear it to the ocean—
the vast, bitter and foul ocean,—
that at least
by so little it may the sweeter,
the clearer be.
Nor for naught
shall thine agoniz'd mad curses
to the welkin have forth-thunder'd.
For there cometh, oh there cometh
(hear, hear him at his ultimate
fugue ecstatic!)
the Man of thy holy hope — He
the expected, the worshippt, the fulfiller;—
of his advent divine, the foreordained

times shorten'd,
with the cry
uninterrupted, savage, fearful, of thy desire,—
O defil'd mountain Torrent, inspir'd
Prophet of evil,—
by Thee!

THE MULE

A SUNRISE WHIMSY

Where spann'd the road lies
by the massy iron bridge
above the power-house with its perpetual
wind-fluttered steam-banner,
I was sauntering ere fully yet day dawned,
listless, of protracted toil weary,
and despairing of sleep.
The wicked steely
glints of oil'd machinery
ponderous, at work
under scrutiny persistent of electric eyes
depending spider-like from roof-rafters,
haunted my mind uncannily;
till homeward I turn'd, and yonder, on the far side
of the lower road-cut, the quarried hill, (gray,
perpendicular, stubborn,) confronted me, crested
with a dusky hunch, gruesome, that at times
seem'd to waver as to outline, and stir
in lurches erratic on the uttermost sheer edge.
Still-standing, long fascinated,
I gaz'd; and at length
the dawn-gleams uncertain, reveal'd
tugging irreverently the patient hill's scalp
of rank weeds wiry,—
a Mule! And I mused
straightway of the People, uncircumspect,
feeding ever on the verge
of a civic abyss without light,
nor feeling of any — great lack,
for the tugging and the munching of the weeds!

Suddenly, as intent at the creature
 I look'd,—that had ceas'd
 in his dignity symbolic to suggest
 aught vulgar, flippant, whimsical,—
 a burst of bloody light volcanic
 (from some crater, so it seem'd,
 close behind him deep-yawning,) etch'd-out
 lean legs, downcast head, ears protuberant,
 ignominious tassel'd tail
 the flush'd sky against, that enhaloed Him!
 Wholly, however, was the Mule
 at the grotesque weird silhouetting of his form
 undismayed; and graz'd on —
 for nowise the illumination, you conceive,
 marr'd the pungency acrid
 of the weeds!
 And a laugh, bitter, unawares
 startled me (tho' my own) recalling
 how we prate — eloquently — about reform,
 progress, enlightenment (foolish
 self-deceivers!) and the sure
 holy common sense of arous'd
 public Opinion!
 But lo,
 from the body of the Mule, (as man's future
 political and social I pondered dejectedly,)
 swift rays to the zenith upflew,
 fan-like outspread; and at once
 the steam-banner, on the power-house flaunted,
 caught fire; and scurrying flufft cloudlets
 like a butterfly bevy, white-frock'd,
 of school-girls from class discipline releas'd,
 through the sky romp'd,—the fresh child's
 glow, of health in their cheeks.
 Then the sun
 red-golden up-bulged from eclipse
 behind the tassel-tail'd, droop-ear'd
 Beast of burden, and behold!
 at last — it was Day!

O People, is it truth, sober? — or a mere
 sanguine self-delusion of minds
 foolishly millennial, (mad theorists!)—O People
 tugging, munching the weeds unconcernedly,—
 the faith,
 that a Sun by thy ill-shap'n bulk, awkward,
 ridiculous. yet mask'd is;
 a Sun
 that even now, up-struggling to shine
 shortly shall the whole heavens enkindle
 to such blaze
 of great glory, as hitherto seer saw not
 in vision apocalyptic?
 Fool! Fool!
 to ask questions of Thee who art wont
 (not heeding star-gazers, nor prophets,)
 to tug away still,
 in the manner of thy hybrid folk
 time out of mind,
 industriously, at the scalp
 wiry-weeded of the doom'd quarry-hill!

ODE TO MOUNT PELEÉ IN ERUPTION

(Not unmindful of Walt Whitman's "Dithyrambs")

I.

O awful Mount,
 Long dormant, dead,
 Thy vomited midnight dark,
 Thy lurid locks of tangled lightning,
 Those miles of explosive flame that licked up the shipping in
 the bay as haywisps,
 The incandescent rivers of rock as a network enmeshing thee,
 The ocean-bed sunk, engulfing the seas, that the waters re-
 gurgitate asteam and abubble with heat,
 The blizzard of ashes, and hail of boulders,
 The devastated city of careless ease afire,

The crashing cathedral towers, timbers incinerated, masonry
 crumbling, metals molten,
 The great cathedral square paved with corpses so thickly
 that they surge up erect in lifelike attitudes of horror,
 Forty thousand souls, suffocated in their beds, charred in the
 open, sodden in the sizzling harbor brine,
 Governor, policeman, sailor, fishmonger, banker,
 Father and son, mother and babe at the breast, and the
 chubby little girl clutching her skirts —
 All, all, alike;
 The maniac murderer alone surviving to escape with a howl
 on the opening of his underground dungeon, and perish
 somewhere in the glare of thy demoniac eye. . . .
 Ha! do these monstrous deeds of Thine mean nought to us,
 Nought to us, O Mount Pelée?

II.

The reptiles — venomous vermin — had forsaken thy fissures
 and crevices,
 For they knew —
 The cattle with a revived instinct fought for freedom,
 For they vaguely understood —
 The populace, panic stricken, prayed to be allowed to flee
 and leave their all behind in the doomed city —
 But prudent men of science,
 (As a committee,)

Decreed there was no danger,
 So the brave governor issued orders,
 Reassured the rabble by his presence, and by the presence of
 his wife and children,
 Wherefore they whom thou didst warn were cowed, were
 shamed into disobedience:
 Then couldst thou, O awful Mount — vent of the infinite
 forces of earth — restrain thee no longer,
 And thy incredible work of destruction was wrought in a
 moment, in the twinkling of an eye —
 Earthquake, darkness, hell belched forth,
 Chaos and desolation!

III.

And men in far-off places all over the habitable globe,
Civilized males, munching cigars in their mouths, twirling
cigarettes, or fingering pipes,
On the street cars, lounging in study chairs, or astride an
office stool, or loafing in a taproom,
Declare: "There is no God,"—
None, for God would have assuredly have hindered thee,
O Mount!
And some parson, supposing Augustine and Calvin in the
divine counsels still,
With a long countenance cries out to his smug, money-get-
ting, pew-rent-paying congregation:
"Behold—judgment on the unspeakable iniquities of that
city!"
And the Pharisee, chewing the cud in the pew, whispers to
his heart, "Amen," and devises all the while uncon-
sciously
Some new penny-in-the-slot machine!
Faugh!

IV.

O fools and heartless hypocrites,
Perverters of truth, and eloquent Job's comforters unto the
dead,
Hearken a word in your secret ear:
Is it not expedient once in a while that our pride should be
checked?
Our materialistic satisfaction with godless possessions dis-
quieted?
That as we pile up our Babels, sink our mile-deep mine-
shafts, burrow our mole-tunnel under sea, cut out our
sewer-canals of solid rock, and threaten the very home
of the free winds with invasion,
We be forced to recall how vast the energy of the Stillness,
The terror of the gentle Hush,
On which dartle the midnight stars,
On which the flood of golden sun down-poureth,
And the crystalline rains of spring?

Is it not well that forty thousand should perish now and then
That the swarming Millions may hesitate a moment, and
 worship or blaspheme—
Their little self-confident, jocose, speculative intellect con-
 founded,
Their heart, sensual or rebellious, clutched for a second by
 the dread of the Unknown?
Ah, was it not well?

V.

"Inhuman"? you shout—"inhuman"?
Absurd nonsense, friend!
Must we not all die, sooner or later die,
Cowards and courageous, fools and philosophers,
All the sons of mighty Mother Earth?
Must not the kindest of us die, and make griefs, cares, sor-
 rows, dismays of soul, for those we love most, and cher-
 ish most tenderly?
Would you, friend, greatly prefer to succumb,
Properly, in your bed, to invisible hosts of bacteria?
Have you such a passionate predilection for germs?
Or would you choose rather, delicate friend, to be slowly
 exhausted by the labor of decent digestion—by the
 smack and non-assimilation of well-prepared victuals?
Or have you perchance a fancy for breathing out a dozen
 centuries or so between doze and doze,
The eyelids prudently uplifted as you peep through the
 lashes, for fear of wasted vitality?
God! are we men? women? boys? girls?
Or only worms, snails, jellyfish, sloths and alligators leth-
 argic with a bellyful of dog?

VI.

Ah, death-dealer, terrible demon—
Monster-mouth of chaos, fire-spouter, sea-churner, uptearer
 of land and sky,
Thou at least hast roared out an emphatic Word,
And forty thousand souls, brave and pusillanimous alike,

With gasp, sigh, wail, howl, shriek, sob, choke, rattle, have
uttered it with thee,
In chorus of sublime frenzy, prayer, childlike faith or rage!
Oh to have perished, speaking that noble Word in unison
with Thee!
If unable to speak it out clearly in life,
To have whispered it dying, as one of forty thousand swal-
lowed up quick in hell:
"The inexhaustible universe!
The reserve of creative energy!
We—not the end of things!
The power, terror, beauty, glory, sublime majesty of God!"

VII.

Were that so cruel, dismal, vexatious an exit for a puny little
human babe of the All Father?
O awful Mount, roar out again thy "No!"
Yet, hear—in spite of Thee
They persist in disagreeing with Us,
Awful Mount!
They prefer, really prefer, living on and on and dying useless!
Being snuffed out some day insignificant,
Being buried at the expense of a weeping and bereaved
family—
God help them!

June 22, 1902.

ODE TO PIKE'S PEAK

THE MOUNTAIN

I.—A

Above the billowy waste of plain—
the grey-green welter of grassy glare;—
with vivid miles of sunflowers splashed,
or marigolds and ox-eyed daisies,
with thistly-leaved white poppies, or starry mentzelias
foamflecked and dappled,
with velvety acres pearl-blue of the sage-brush
subtly hazed;

Oh, at every season, to have explored it lovingly,
 and feel its multitudinous life of bloom
 in eye and nostril linger!
 To hear the meadow-lark,
 uphuddled on the fence-post,
 drop cheerily into the wind
 monotonous gushes of delicious melody;
 to watch the hawk at his vigilant
 slow wheel in the dazzling air;
 the prairie dogs scurrying holeward
 through their villages of sandy mounds,
 or on their haunches, like sentinels,
 in the vibrant sunheat posted whimsically;
 nevertheless from here —
 as up we climb the bastioned bluffs,
 its numerous miracles effaced from view and hearing;
 only now an infinite spread of sea
 far forth to the faint horizon-line
 dizzily aheave; . . .
 and above it,—
 never can abate
 the heart's first wonder, the mind's amazement!
 Insolent, serrated, abrupt, stupendous,
 The Mountains;
 vertically uphurled,
 into the azure wedged,
 buttressing their mightiest sublime One,
 the noble high-soaring Peak,
 loftily aloof,
 roseate golden,
 cloudy insubstantial,
 Vast!

I.— B

O erupted fury primeval,
 scragged fold of the earth's straining crust
 jammed skyward convulsively,
 through torrid ages on ages
 scarred and splintered of the storm-bolts,

of the seething rain-floods scooped and carven;
 thy ribbed acclivities
 lacerated of sudden streams;
 the gorged torrents, infuriated,—
 wrenching, braying toppled masses,
 tearing ravenously granitic channels—
 grooves and ruts, troughs and gulches
 to deep-gaping dank cañons;
 ages on ages in the arctic
 ice-continent's boreal clutch,
 of its glacier-tentacles constricted,
 gouged, crunched, ripped, mangled, ground;
 the wastage of the moraines
 in avalanches and landslides
 tumbled thunderously plainward;
 ages on ages, the fierce hurricanes
 ablare with their sand-blasts,
 their hurled gravel-hail rough-hewing thee,
 till jagged tusks abraded,
 spires fantastical, crooked pinnacles,
 protrude vertiginously;
 and dragonlike rags of monstrous rock
 corrugated, honeycombed, grotesquely gargoyled,
 rear and ramp terrific
 over thy precipitous slopes atilt;
 O Mount immortal, serene,
 scornest thou to wage war for thy life?
 Beyond thy forested cones dishevelled,
 and thy cupolas enormous withdrawn,
 behind the embrasured bulwarks of thy foothills,
 wilt thou resist not, at length aroused,
 the perpetual onset outrageous
 of thine enemies?
 Canst thou forever
 brood awful
 above thine own chaotic might
 omnipotent
 moveless, impassive, rapt?

How deliberate
 the approach, how many,
 O Mountain, the footsteps
 unto thy kingly high-seat!
 Forth-thrown first to the fore
 the sheer bluffs lift their parapets;
 then, treeless, shrubless, the undulant
 flats unroll them,
 whereover heavy freights earthshaking
 that bellow and snort,
 seem but sooty worms awriggle;
 whereon the city overcasting
 her rectangular lattice of lawn-edged poplar avenues
 is but a frivolous wooded patch of shimmer,—
 so broadly liberal their expanse;
 and, where the flats then decline
 to a creek-bed, upswelleth
 ruddy-soiled, scant-grassed, the mesa —
 by murk scrub-oaks leopard-spotted,
 with clustered yucca bespiked,
 whence behold, in the even-sun how marvelous
 thy majesty! From thy stately head —
 wind-tossed, magnificent
 thy stormlocks to the zenith
 flow free;
 the effulgence sifted through them
 thy recluent countenance shadoweth
 as a fulvous aureate veil;
 each fold of craggy drapery distinct —
 dusk-green and emerald, red-mottled—
 about thy middle loose-girded
 a mantle to thy firm-planted feet of adamant
 down-sweepeth in imperial train;
 thy throne despotic — proud brethren
 less only than Thou,
 for thy haughty pride the prouder
 upbearing thee;

and lo!

Over thy whole glory
what azurous bloom is shed . . .
fragrantly, as of an intervening
cerulean heaven!

Ah, who, who
worshipfully must not avow him
thy liege, O thou dream
resolutely real, flushed with deity,
lordly Mountain sun-crowned!

THE MEANING

II.—A

From far yet, in pioneer decades
six days' march hence, or seven,
in endless train a-creak the wanes crawling
between whirling smoke columns of desert dust—
(their garish tunnels of sultry shelter
for the wives and the little children;
the trail indicated to later emigrants
athwart the continent cynically
by grotesque wreckage and bleached bones;)
Oh, what savage shouts of drunken joy,
what murmurs of thanksgiving
suffocated by devout emotion,
hailed thy first dim looming
as a cloudy suspiration at earth's uttermost edge —
then, soon again thy ghostly uprise
as a sapphirine vague pyramid —
and at length,
thy sudden imminence of luminous mass!
To trudgers, all but exhausted,
hardy homeseecker, rash-spirited adventurer,
what visions beatific of sweet peace
by honest toil and slow thrift attained,
What ungodly hallucinations
of fabulous gain squandered
in insolent lust!

How wast thou not to them, O Mountain,
a prophet's cry, a trumpet-blast of inspiration,
a theophany of the very grace covenanted
in Accad ages gone
to the God-expatriated patriarch of Ur?

II.—B

Ah, to interpret aright thy purpose!
For methinks thy silent welcome
to a people that went by unheedful
of unspoken higher meanings, nowise
was thy final word; else wherefore also
again and again the unwilling eye
fascinate? Beckon insistently, allure,
and the spirit tantalize — ever Thee,
Thee, in manifold moods to contemplate?

Which were, if one might have token sure,
thy inmost sense inscrutable
and last intention?

For whatever man doth long envisage,
he transfigureth to human semblance;
hearkening oracles of his destiny
in river and wind and sea.

Therefore, speak, dost thou pierce untoward
into the vortex tempestuous
of the welkin thus,—
a morbid self-chastiser?

stony head and breast exposing
to insensate rage fanatically —
the livid lightning
at lurid play about thee?

Nay, rather, thou dost uplift thee
a generous-hearted preempter
of ills allotted at large?
the knotted whiptongs of chaos, braving,
that but for thee
would demoniacally leash the earth

Or truth-eager, wouldst thou explore —
 with fierce torturing mystery
 cloaking thee,
the awful turmoil
 but to discern there in the great hush
 at midmost fury —
the still majesty of holy law
 as Afric Sinai of yore?

II.—C

Ha! Perchance, 'tis some disgust misanthropic
 caught of a world-ancient grief
 that biddeth thee thus gruffly
shake off our leafy brethren,
 fain to win thee with fond caresses
 to a happier mind.
For bare utterly dost thou rise, alone —
 and the verdant balsams aromatic,
 the silver spruces
 ashen-violet or beryl-bluish
 thou hast repulsed;
the red-barked
 cliff-clamberers also
 with their lustrous long spines
 in sunshine iridescent, and their haunting
 æolian roar,—
Thou wouldst none of them!
The slender, rigidly erect, sombre-suited sentinels
 and the wind-twisted knotty cedars,
 and, with their russet and sanguine
 October pomp,—the hardy shrub-oaks
 In close fellowships clustered;
Ay, and, emerald-sheeny, the quaking aspens
 that flicker up a primrose yellow
 in autumnal ecstasy; and, asprawl,
 the juniper, pale-berried, close-clinging.
None, none wilt thou tolerate
 rustling sociably their soul communion?

II.—D

How otherwise may one interpret thee,
strange Scorners — not only
of tree-fellowship; — for the innocent
flower children, dost thou forbid
lest they come nigh thee!

Delicately dangling the ruby gilia;
the magical willowy wands awave
of the goldenrod; the cerulean
penstemon in skyey patches;
the companies of the columbine
white and mauve;
the blazing-stars, staunch and crimson;
the tremulously feminine
campanulas;—nay, nor the stalwart
scarlet-berried kinick-kinick
and all their manifold
bee-murmurous kith and kin —

None wilt thou invite thee, to make merry
up thy precipitous sides;
tho' from base to top thy fellows
make them joyful
year by year with their gay invasion.

Do their foolish hopes, foolish fears
to a reasonless ire provoke thee?
Their hand-clappings, hand-claspings,
infantile laughter and complaint
irk thee sore?

Wherefore rather
wouldest thou enermine thee
with the snows dumb and deaf,
feel the sharp ice cram thy gorges,
cap thy peak and steel-fend thee
against assailing sympathies heart-anguishful
with what springeth up to perish futile?

At heart a pessimist, O Mount,—
forbidding thyself the insolent self-praise of pity,
if impotent, alas, to foster
and arrest their doom?

II.—E

Or perchance, 'tis a voracious ardor
instinctive, that upheaveth thee
for purer air,
for light
by a dense atmosphere unsifted; —
the dazzle intolerable of noon,
the quiet
of the starred midnight
unprofaned;
the pallid, opaline
dawns, and the brassy sundowns
extravagant;
the violet afterglows
and amethystine moonshine mystical!
Yea, a passion
that possesseth thee to refract the day,
and empurpled, glow-enaureoled
prolong it —
catch the first breaking gleams,
and steadily shine and shine
to prognosticate the larger glory
that shall engulf at last all gloom?

II.—F

Ah, methinks now, utterly,
utterly hast thou abjured, O Mount,
the Titan struggle without reason
against fatal forces all-fashioning,
which with brutal mouths agape
thy scarped foothills proclaim;
their skeleton strata
from their livid-pale green-speckled rent flanks
jutting truculently — as tawny
buff or rufous crags weather-battered
with scabrous cicatrices, and bedabbled
with the purplish black gore stains
of rebellious battle!

Wherefore mute,
upbuilded elementally with sheer cliffs,
a stupendous pile
of loose-tumbled monoliths,
above thy fellows art thou exalted
thro' resignation; by thy gaze
at the Eternal eternalized;
an altar whereon for sacrifice
nought is spread
but heaven's own gift —
the radiant raiment
wherewith in winter it endueth thee
for thy service sacramental,
O Enthusiast;
Yea, nought else at all
save thyself hast thou to offer
the all-hallowing divine Blue!

THE MAN

III.—A

Ah, what fancies perverse
doing thee dishonor;
into moods of humanity translating
thy solitude superhuman!
For not surely art thou an unfeeling mass
of willess forces upflung;
a chronicle of chance vicissitudes
for geologist to ponder;
a mindless glyph and symbol luck-sculptured
to minister (thro' priest and prophet)
unto some obsolete edification;
a picturesque blind disarray
to be exploited of dauber and word-monger;—
an inexhaustible dull hoarder
of precious ore for the crazed prospector;
a boastful lurer hither
of sight-seekers from every clime!

Ludicrous indignities done thee
 of small-statured specialists!
 For who knoweth not what thou art,
 O Mount?—
 Quick energy, for thyself existing,
 incalculably potential,
 together held livingly of the law
 that sways suns throughout the universe;
 but the law, nowise imposed on thee!
 Nay, rather of thine own joyful choice
 adopted and obeyed,
 for thou couldest in volcanic orgasm
 leap forth, a flame to heaven,
 cumbering the earth with ruin
 unimaginable; or beyond her atmosphere
 outfly her reach
 and stray thro' space forever,
 stellar dust.

And, thou holdest thee still
 self-contained, balanced to the greater Centre
 in unaffected humility; nay, fast-grappling thee
 as of desperation,
 for very being dependent on loving contact
 and intercourse essential with the Whole;
 of no extraneous power uplifted,
 nor on pinions idealistic
 airily oversoaring
 a despised abyss of peril,
 thou didst deign not to explore!

By inherent bulk, massy power
 is thy sublimation compassed,
 maintained spiritually through all degrees,
 possessed substantially;—
 the mastered space
 in thy vastitude embodied,
 thou dost reach up from depths immeasurable
 continuously to thine own height,
 with alacrity self-upholden;
 albeit content
 to indicate for others

heights yet higher to attain
if it be their destiny;
albeit refraining thee, from futile strivings
self-withholden,
of thy proper fate enamored,
with the cosmic Order at peace,
and with thy Self.

III.—B

Ah, hast thou an inkling
that thou art thus our ideal
of the magnanimous god-like Man?
Nay, how shouldest thou know at all
what thou art—to us men?
Ah, how shouldest thou have knowledge
in any wise as we, creatures
of a day that are in part and are not,
poor human glowworms
ambitious for firefly freedom;—
to whom is granted knowledge—
that in æons maybe and æons
in some scion reincarnate
more worthy of our democratic ancestry,
we may taste—if it be possible
on this whirling planet
for such as we—
the bliss of actual being!
But thou, Mountain, already art,
verily art, hast thy selfhood
achieved, nor needest
inquire what thou art and art not;—
for thee in equipoise, no progress further,
nor retrogression to loathe
with frenzied terror;
ignorant, ah, totally ignorant
of the mean and petty in thy environment:—
the nauseous titillation from the bustle beneath, about
thee,
the parasitical squirm and swarm,
the precipitate antlike

in-and-out, to-and-fro of man —
forsooth presuming
to discover thee,
Thee of the million ages!
investing thee with his uneuphonious
cognomen lest thou suffer
continuing nameless; with scrupulous accuracy
noting thee (a scrawly centipede)
on omniscient maps;
charitably advertising thine exact altitude
with tinted profiles of thy distinctive features!

Ignorant, blessedly ignorant
of the ingenious cogroad to thy summit
as a noose about thy neck to picket thee!
Of the halfbred herds haled at ease
above the clouds, of their bovine jests
and æsthetic hee-haws
when from thy height for the first time
they behold without reverent awe
the sun ascend the heaven;
and with a bored impatience
await critically the program's ending
to assure themselves they have their purchase; —
then turn, relieved and joyous,
to the sandwich and the pie!

Ignorant, blessedly ignorant
of the crasser fools who chisel out
records of their pusillanimous personalities . . .
for the unwinking stars
(who could doubt it?) to scan inquisitively;
a rebus for supposititious Marsites,
with telescopes askew;
a text hieroglyphic for unborn better races
to ponder centuries and centuries!

Ah, blessedly, thrice blessedly ignorant altogether —
a victim never therefore
of the horrible vertigo, the heartsick
angry scorn of fellowmen —
never slow-sinking in the swallowing quagmire —
suspicious of thine own blood, brawn, brain, soul!

III.—C

Yet, notwithstanding are not We
by the very witness of the sceptic anguish
more than Thou,—

complacent, of doubt incapable?
At least, destined to nobler issue?

Behold if one instant thou deign
from thy high trance to stoop thee,
how we have journeyed on and on
from viscous flow and reflex gush
of cellular stuff, to cerebrations
that coruscate away the universe!
From protoplasm to vertebrate
mammal, man,
from amœba to Plato, Cæsar, Napoleon, Goethe!

Ah, who in the slime incipient
should have foreknown us?

Who then shall dare prognosticate
with calm assurance
what fairer, firmer types of Manhood
may not come forth from us in ages?

Some higher Being, perchance
of transilient imagination, unto ours
as ours unto that of wildcat,
crested jay, or woodchuck,
or of the prolific grasshopper
of the plains?

III.—D

Alas, how know we surely
Thou hast not, long ere we began,
grown aweary of the zigzag climb
of Evolution?

And hast learned to prefer static raptures
the perpetual reticent self-identity;
having left behind
the palpitant communion,

for utter junction with the universe
of thine own election and achievement wrought
through denial of separate essence?
For Thee henceforth no former time,
no hereafter,
nought to wish, fear, or hope —
a life, without end to anticipate,
of start immemorial,—
All focused in the Eternal subsisting 'Now!'
Oh, Mount of God most holy?
Who for thee — shall make reply?

THE BEECH IN WINTER

I.

How gracious to look upon
art thou
this sunny winter morn,
O Beech. Not now
the bleak flaws and sleet-swirls hiss
in rude onrush
their gusty spite at thee,
and menace. Nay, not this
sweet holy day of windless hush.
For, basking in the pale sun, lo,
of stark shrub and icicled weed fine-sifted,
the dry immaculate snow
doth in nook and hollow nestle,
and lieth ghost-drifted
in quiet stretches wide
like rippled sands by the beach of the moonlit sea.
And Thou,—unchallenged the while to wrestle
with hundred-arm'd demons of air —
dost still as thy wintry wont, abide
in the mystery dreamfast
of the ever-recurrent summertide
vaguely remembered. Wherefore, at last

to break thy silence no more
dare
I forbear.
Nor surely wilt thou withhold
comfort brotherly if in sooth thou be
even as I, most gracious Tree,
Twain-souled.

II.

O embodied Allegory —
out of the midst of roots
which from the depths of gloom have shrunk
snakewise to writhe among lilac shoots
and clumps of grass rime-hoary,—
how straight doth thy mist-grey trunk
uprise for the skyward soar
of thy bole evermore!
Yet how homesick too dost thou grieve
for touch of the earth iron-frore:
the friendlier nether
half of thy boughs
(whereto white-frosted numberless leaves together
ashudder close-cleave)
do stoop them
in gentle fellowships,
yea, and adrowse
do droop them,
that only their uttermost delicate tips
uplift them, as tho' they awoke at the end
ashamed so to bend
utterly down to the ground,—
when their brethren, full half of thee, higher
strive and aspire,
and everywhither forth-feather —
(not one sole leap to some single
zenith of aspiration supreme) —
but the rather, with the whole heaven's round
about and above
to commingle
and lose them, they seem;

yea, full fain
again to caress it and yet again
with reverent touch of manifold longing and love.

III.

Ha, the Unseen now sways,
O embodied Prayer — soft, soft
sways Thee, and me — ay, Me
the impalpable spirit with thee.

In vain abandoned nests aloft
would recall to our mind
blessèd earth-sufficiencies:
home-love, love of kind
(builders, brooders, fledged nestlings flown;—)
from thy roots to thy topmost sprays
alone!

And methinks 'tis a phantom bird
only in memory heard
warbleth wailful the plaintive but plain
clear song of truth: —

That never shall we attain
strive howso we may, and pass
alas,
wingless as we and uncouth —
(nay, never, tho' gifted we were
as the birds of the air
with flight for desire) yon sky —
you
and I —
of pearly murk and aërial pellucid blue!

IV.

Nevertheless pray on,
albeit thou have not thy prayer.
In storm and still pray on, that so
this lonesome wintertide
Thou yet may'st win us, ere we know,

(our fainting faith's Upstayer,
 our wordy doubt's wordless Gainsayer,
 and gracious Rebuker of wilful pride)
 to prayer, to deep-souled prayer;
 nowise a devotion perverse —
 a false humility, our stature to curse
 and station; — but aspirant at once, dear Beech,
 and lowly of heart; remembering the lore
 the Wisest and Purest teach: —
 How thy downward yearning indeed doth foretoken
 the Sun's ardent, ever-new advent for birth
 in thee, and our kith and kin;
 How thy upward strain
 amain
 hath the passion outspoken
 which doth with the life begin
 of all loyal children of earth —
 to display the bond unbroken
 that knitteth athwart vast space
 our need to his golden outflow of grace: —
 Quickener at once and Slayer,
 who begat our wills as he willed.
 Wherefore pray on, for praying thou art thy prayer
 and ours fulfilled.

V.

Then wherefore holdest thou fast
 the shrivelled pleasures and passions dead of the vanished
 year?
 Shake, shake them abroad
 scattered to be, and amassed,
 in the hither and thither
 and futile nowhither
 of things — spent and forgotten at last!
 If leafage of life thou do crave,
 why endeavor
 the outlived and lifeless to save?
 Nor the new shall come to thee ever
 from without!

(When burgeoned thou hast and bloomed
 wilt thou marvel more, or doubt?)
 Yea, from within, from within thee,
 Thee verily, even as dead,
 (snow-shrouded, ice-tombed)
 thy glory-to-be must thou win thee!
 The sun, overhead,
 with his ambient rays shall warm
 thy wood, for the sap to mount.
 The earth beneath thee, thawed,
 shall nutriment yield from her frost-freed fount
 of chemic energy. The tenuous atmosphere
 (thou feelest now as caress,
 now as buffet of storm) —
 shall serve thee no less.
 New fibrous strength will it grant thee
 unto ampler spread,
 and stouter stand in thy stead
 here, on thy gravel hill, here
 where kindly Fate did plant thee. . . .
 (Thy gravel hill fern-thatched
 in the spring, and with yellow violets sun-patched,
 and with mist-flower blue overhazed. . . .)
 But out from thee shall come,
 from thy Self, very thee of Thee,
 unregarded, unworshipped, unpraised —
 and from no remote Elysium
 (for me as for thee,) dear Tree,
 the life, the might, the thought, the will, the form!

VI.

For still —

O thou most gracious Scion
 of the world-old forest
 primeval,—the God thou adorest
 and dost livingly rely on —
 thy God (How often with thee have I knelt
 in spirit, O Prayer made visible!) —
 thy God,—who else is He but thine own
 Nigher Self, inly felt

but unknown;
Whom knowing not, heart-simple, thou feignest
other than thou,
without and afar,
hereafter, not now;
and in hope and wistful solitude remainest,
yearning ever to sun and to star
and beyond; — and thy spirit refrainest,
in meekness amiss,
from thy present absolute bliss!

VII.

Vain our knowledge, Ah, vain;
nor aught of life shall we gain
therefrom. Nay, let us not darken
counsel with foolish speech
of a wisdom unvital. Hearken, hearken,
only I beseech
henceforward thy soul's behest —
which is best.

And never, (O sanest
Lover of the meek and the lowly,
Adorer likewise of the high and most holy,)
never refrain from thy old grateful reach
earthward, nor from thy manifold strain
heavenward, (tho' vain it seem — vain)
if so be, Thou thereby mayest
even as myself attain
(the while thou yearnest and prayest)
to thine own right stature and duty,
the truth
of Thee, beyond knowing and seeing,
the deathless youth
of thy goodliest being
and beauty;
O thou that art twain-souled —
yea, art my Self, from shrouding mystery freed,
for me in hallowed mood to behold
and understand and heed.

AFTERWORD

Not have these Lines been lying
in Metre's Procrustean bed;
their rack-extended feet,
or truncated limbs adorn'd
with barbarous jewels of Rime.
Free be these Lines,
and their Rhythm:
only the motion — responsive to soul —
of sadness or madness or mirth
irresistible;
yielding the body in confidence
absolute unto the God who would speak,
through leap and whirl and pose
in breathless obedience to Him!

LIFE AND LOVE

A SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY
IN SONNET SEQUENCES

PART I.—LOVE'S DAWN

I. THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

AN INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE
TO A FRIEND OF YOUTH

I.

LOVE, THE SELF REVELATOR

O Love, soul-healer, heaven-inbringer, hail;
not for thy promises of instant good;—
for whilst we do not ever the thing we would
and live thus virtueless, most false the tale
folk feign of thee! Earth-bliss that may not fail?
Alas, a manhood, yea and a womanhood
hallowed and whole, vain lures and wiles withstood,
to prove thee all they praise, alone avail!

Yet hail, if thou but winnow, Love, and sift;
if we, thro' harmonies marred the cause discern
of disaccord; and Thou (allowing no escape),
urge on our indolent will the soul to shape;
whereby the sooner perfected, to learn
what the unspeakable sweetness in thy gift!

II.

DIVINE DISCONTENT

For, comest thou, a luller into ease
 (false ease of mean content with things not best,)
 of our frail hearts no heavenly angel-guest
wert thou, O Love, and thy sworn devotees,
entering thy temple in close companies,
 gross worshippers of One, whose base behest
 were "Slay the God within! for the brief rest
while biding here upon thy folded knees!"

But being thyself, sweet Love, dear Love, O come;
 lay hold upon us, make our frailties all
 mutual slayers,—purgers of the impure,
 erectors of earth-glories to endure
beyond their home,—when we obey the call
"Friend, come up higher!" tear-blind for thank, and dumb.

III.

LOVE'S ALTRUISM

Should there have been—(when all we guess is known,
 and errors fall stripped bare by heartless fact
 as rose of petals)—no part to enact
other than this strange earthlife; and alone
it be our human lot to laugh and moan
 for trifles insufficient won or lacked;—
 still, Love, thy office were not to compact
an altar of such nothings, or a throne!

Self were our Idol not, nor thou his priest!
 Still were it well by alternate beck and scourge
 to give us what should have undying worth;
 that if at length—'tis only "earth to earth,"
what is with thee thus buried, prove at least
 deserving of thy fullest royal dirge!

IV.

LOVE THE FRIEND

So, Love, I pray thee, open our sealed eyes;
the witchery-snared arouse from dreams o'er-sweet,
whence the too late awaking, were to beat
bruised breasts in self-revenge; and make thou wise
thy dear but foolish questioners, by replies
conclusive in austerity; and greet
with gentle frankness them who bode deceit
lurks in thy rainbow of our sorrow-skies!

For surely, of birth and holy growth—the pains
(tho' death be death) are good! Is not the rose,
in finished blossom, full reward of rains,
payment for sunshine drunken? Ought the close
of dissolution to dissuade who grows,
from hoarding now of growth his nobler gains?

V.

SUNDERED FRIENDS

Fare forth, old friend of youth's tumultuous years,
when every day bred multitudes of deeds
in fancy done or cancelled;—ay, as breeds
the sea her bubbles, and the rain his tears,
woodlands their flowers unnoted, bending ears
of bristling grain the field, or snowflake seeds
the roadside milkweed. Woe to him who feeds
on hopes illusive and unmeaning fears.

Nay, note not now wherein we differ, friend,
but what continueth a shared faith; for so
shall old times balmily linger in new days—
ay, make them hoar with the dear dust of ways
trodden together. Fare then forth, but know
friends part to meet which ways so e'er they wend.

II. LOVE'S PRELUDE

I.

WOLFENBÜTTEL

The grisly castle on arching pillars built,
 islanded, with the shallow stream for moat,
 th' old drawbridge—all did dreamlike overfloat
a gulf; and the Child could feel the stone walls tilt,
the rock-props bow, the whole labyrinth down-spilt
 (floors, roofs, halls, corridors) thro' th' awful throat
 of darkness; and a delicious horror smote
who under pillows tucked his monstrous guilt.

Ah, th' sweet protracted shudder athwart the square,
 against his dazzled eye a crystal prism,
the bordering linden miraculously fair
 with opaline bright outlines; and before
his feet, alway ahead, the vague abysm
 he dared, yet dared not, plunge in to explore!

II.

YOUNG ICARUS

Old folk in a big house among huge trees,
 tall rosiers guarding stiff the gravelly path,
 small boats whittled to sail in marble bath,
and giant-man (if so his Kingship please)
to coax and wheedle, or bullyingly seize
 for battle-charger and ride with royal wrath
 in paper-helmet whirling sword of lath;—
Ha, and the poodle too — to fondle and tease!

Soon, pockets bulged by gaudy Easter eggs,
 wings fast-sewed to his shoulders, homeward flew
 along the road proud-hearted Icarus;
 whom then befel (as even to all of us)
stung of ditch-nettles face and hands and legs,
 bidding in tears his hopes of flight adieu!

III.

AS IN PICTUREBOOKLAND

The barn with cluck of hens and cheep of chicks,
cackle of geese, and turkey's gobble-gobble,
pigeons' wing-winnowing, and ducks quick wabble;
red cows in meadows milked; fly-angered kicks
of stabled horses; kittens at darling tricks
rollicking in the rubbish; pigs asquabble
and squealing; th' old blind watch-hound's hobble;
enormous strawstacks, shaggy-eaved hayricks.

All these (not now in the Land of Picturebook,
like goblin, ogre, fairy) real and true!
Free, free for climb, run, leap and somersault,
and May-bugs mightily from saplings shook;
smeared hands and face and clothes—no shame or fault;
what joy, to make a town-bred child halloo!

IV.

THE FIRST FUNERAL

Tiptoeing greedily for a plump black cherry,
chasing the butterflies from field to field,
wasp-hunters crouched behind some shrubby shield
with bow and arrow in red-paint savagèry,—
ah, well I know those days were long and merry;—
tho' best of all the sorrowful hour we kneeled
by a dear wee mother robin that revealed
her love in death, whom forth we stole to bury!

Over her young she clung when th' wicked crow
pecked, pecked away. And not until he slashed
her little throat, and tossed her out, had she
forsaken them, dying. And, from the apple-tree
on guard by the empty nest, the father dashed
at every chance bird-comer in fury of woe!

V.

ROADSIDE THEOPHANY

Laid is the road-dust by a summery shower;
 on hand and cheek outheld drop splashy jewels
 from leafless plane-trees; flights and fierce pursuals,
 in panic glee behind their trunks to cower,
 or leap out thence the foe to overpower;
 rebellions new, and desperate subduals,
 reprisals, truces, boisterous renewals
 of mimic war; when, look, yon roadside flower!

Spell-bound it held him still and calm and dumb.

Its beauty, ah, its beauty . . . a hyacinth . . . wild . . .
 each bell asparkle dewily . . . for him . . .
 but not to pull . . . to love! And overcome
 of the choking passion, there the untaught child
 worshipped with cherubim and seraphim.

VI.

MYSTIC KINSHIP

From the far land where only good folk live
 mountains reach higher, rivers broader flow,
 trees huger, and strange fruit and blossoms grow,
 some day was She to come,—who could forgive
 (tho' idle and greedy and noisy and talkative)
 her bad wee boy. But days were many and slow,
 and he had seen Her—oh, so long ago!
 Not love, then; a weird thrill inquisitive.

One day at dawn he 'woke, and with a cry
 leaped from his cot, and snuggled close and warm,
 and laughed, and gasped, and sobbed not knowing why.
 Was it the spirit remembered,—or the flesh,—
 th' old birth-woe? and thro' Eden walked afresh?
 and felt one mystic bliss two souls inform?

VII.

TOWARD FIESOLE

Citron and oleander rows; paths part and meet,
caper-bloom blotching terrace-walls; twin-pines
bless the cool house the noon-glad sun beshines;
in the laurel grove a moss'd familiar seat;
cicadas shriek without in the dancing heat;—
great figtrees sprawl them, and upleaping vines
close-chamber, and far, in slow processional lines,
gnarled hoary olives haze the glary wheat.

By th' plashy fountain, on his broken plinth,
Pan pipeth jessamine-melodies abroad;
a little white-frooked maiden in her lap
drops baby hands; while lost in the labyrinth
of olden fable, I drop (by sweet mishap)
flowers on her head, with wonder overawed.

VIII.

SAN GIOVANNI

Holy city in the fertile plain outspread,
thine still the secret (tho' forgot long since)
of Her,—estranged and lost to th' fairy prince—
until a dream the little maid was dead
brought fever-nights of sobs to a little bed,
and longings sore to track her faint foot-prints
into the mystery,—gleaning golden hints
of God, as jasmine sprays, to crown her head.

In vain he yearned upon some festal day,
rapt of the chant, astare at candle-shine
about high altars twinkling marvellously;
but, San Giovanni, when the Duomo uprose,
itself one altar lit in the night divine,
the stars with the Child spake — what no man knows.

IX.

GROWING APART

Sweet-brier and spruce wax friendly side by side:
 'flutterbys' fill him with a jealous ache
 that drunken sips of her bloom-wine they take,—
greedy bees tousle her petals and overglide,
and tumble them irreverently, and deride
 his rage:—Rogues, wait till a few seasons make
 his treeship stout; then will be fir-cones shake
to crush rude wooers of his chosen bride!

Ah, the years—they came; nor soon the silver spruce
 forgot, for low his branches drooped and yearned
 to earthward; but the striving sap updrove
each season his blue-tipt beauty; and wont and use
 of sun and storm fashioned him, till he clove
the sky, and ignorant roots the sweet-brier spurned!

X.

BOCCA D' ARNO

Dense forests along the river loudly roar
 in the wind. On, still we rode; till came
 the deep hoarse notes of thunder that proclaim
the March Mediterranean; and sudden, inpour
on white sands—flashing seas, that were before
 unto the boy a weird and awful name —
 now a great madness his spirit to untame,
a horror of marvel, a glory to adore!

Long, fascinated of the dusk, he ran
 pursuing still some bark of ghostly sail,
 ere breathless on the shore he sank alone.
When cometh again unto the fullgrown man
 such word of worship on the blustering gale,
 such rapturous certainty of the Unknown?

XI.

FIRST MANHOOD

The pass attained, in hushed expectance stood,
intrepid fellow-farers, he and I—
yea, I—even I at length—who dared defy
prejudgment, novice in the brotherhood
of men,—that know the evil from the good
and freely choose, proud so to do or die!
Foolhardily pinnaced? Ah, not over-high
for hero hearts, who will the thing they would!

Hark! a low growl—a roar—the avalanche
down-hurting foamy torrents to the abyss—
Howbeit, we tremble not nor start nor blanch,
intoxicated of youth's Alpine air. Hold, hold!—
myriad ice-peaks afire with rose and gold. . .
Ah, God, the terror of beauty and extreme bliss!

XII.

PRIMEVAL MAN

Methought that I surveyed the conquered earth,
and felt my breast swelling with pride of kind:—
Man, feeblest, slayer with lightning of the mind,
lord of all life, and final judge of worth!
Suddenly, the sky, roaring, gives wild birth
to shaggy mammoths who the forests grind,
huge bears, and wolfpacks fleetier than the hind,
that check my vaunting with a monstrous mirth:—

“Thinkest our fear of man—a fear of thee,
poor cowardly liver by thine apish wits?
Our conqueror left earth with us long ago!
Degenerate heir of unearned benefits,
wouldst thou dare front us with his spear and bow?
His eye couldst thou endure so long as we?”

XIII.

PARENTAL JEALOUSY

And it was so—that, when against the wall
the King's seat set, and none in David's room
among the captains, out of the sullen gloom
glowered on Jonathan the fell eyes of Saul:—
“Son of perverse rebellion, wherewithal
hath Samuel 'witched thee so to choose thy doom,—
yea, and mock before all men thy mother's womb?
Next to the Bethlehemite? Thy thrall's base thrall?”

The javelin hurled, forth strode in anger and shame
Jonathan from the King his father's tent;
and, David's heart and hand to strengthen, spent
his wonderful love beyond belief of man.
Yet for thy father, amid the world's acclaim,
hast thou no pity, O Jonathan, Jonathan?

XIV.

THE SOUL'S EDEN

Strange madness of vainglory, O Greek commander,
weeping for other worlds to subjugate!
and didst not know, though splendid was thy state,
though to thy lusts unbounded realms might pander,
proffering thee costlier delicacies, godlike grander
triumphs than deified despots dream'd; though fate
worship thy memory, and vaunt thee “Great,”—
numberless empires knew not Alexander?

Each human soul a realm,—nay, world complete,—
joyous or sad, but free! Nor ever can
(save by Love's gracious leave) ambitious feet
tread on its sacred soil; for still the ban
of some strong God bids conquerors retreat:
a flaming sword invisible to man.

XV.

FLOWER-TALISMANS

No friends in the monkish many-eyed solitude
but kingcup, crowfoot, wild geranium,
heartsease, and poppy, in the herbarium
mummied devoutly; and tho' their souls elude
capture, unto my spirit unsubdued
in dreams they come from th' flower Elysium
as dainty maidens gracious, frolicsome,—
that straightway vanish, ardently pursued.

What snout-tusked behemoth, or crocodile
sunning lank jaws in the foul ooze of Nile,
could sense the approach of translunary things;
and creatures immaterial, uncreate,—
witcheries sweet, vague marvels, hallowings
boyishly shy, zephyrously delicate?

XVI.

ALTENBAUMBURG

THE LILIES

Of Altenbaumburg the grim tale is told,—
How the lord thereof of old to Holy Land
fared, cross on bosom. And a lewd kinsman planned
the lady's ruin. When to all wooings cold,—
of smiles he taxed her for a page high-souled.
And long the subtly kindled flame he fanned,
ere the earl, sped home, by torturing doubt unmanned,
and frenzied smote, and laid the twain in mould.

Lo, on the morrow above the outcast grave
twin lilies shone; but th' ruthless sword, which slew
lady and youth, their upright purity clave.
In vain. For, with the dawn they uprose anew
and bloomed God's witness she was leal and true.
Then thro' his heart fierce grief the death-thrust drave!

XVII.

ALTENBAUMBURG

THE COMFORTER

Alas, and couldst thou thus smite and slay
whom thou didst swear for better and for worse
to cherish—a woman? Poor passionate heart perverse,
of wicked calumny the piteous prey,
what durst thou in the awful judgment say—
a judge thyself, unjust? No rays disperse
of moon or star the midnight of thy curse—
a living gloom in God's undying day.

But hark, another legend: For seven-score
blind palsied years he lived,—shunned, feared, unknown,
deemed mad, for that at morn and eve he kneeled
by those twin lilies to wring his hands and groan. . .
Till—God's own mother came and blessed and healed,
and he had rest, and the lilies bloomed no more.

XVIII.

FORETASTE AND AFTERTASTE

Prepotent wizardry of bygone joys!
often have I beheld thy faraway smile
and marvelled what thy vision—over stile
athwart field, beyond stream;—what thing might poise,
Mother, midair,—invisible to a boy's
penetrant sight,—that so could thee beguile,
grief-haunted, thee? Tho' sweeter than erstwhile,—
in memory sipped, no golden honey cloys?

Ah, thou didst awe inquiry. Unprofaned
the hallowed mysteries, my head I bowed
reverent, and lonely with thy loneliness.
Yet, neither could I to thee my hopes confess,
my boyish faiths,—adventures unavowed
to goals of fortune, never since attained!

XIX.

MÜNSTER AM STEIN

Two castled crags buttress the mount; their feet
washed by the silver of the shallow river;
shrubs, briers and grasses whisper, waver and quiver,
in wanton airs with linden subtly sweet;
but th' brine-pumps shudder, sob and low entreat,
like spirits in torment. Ah, who may deliver
souls from self-loathing? Life-giver and forgiver,
why now and ever thy best boons incomplete?

I leaned me over th' parapet of the bridge,
when sudden anear some strange soft voice spake slowly:—
"Thither thou goest, and so"—"Not I—Lord, Lord."
"Yea, child, for that thou hast thyself abhorred."
Deep-sighing I gazed from moon-hazed ridge to ridge,
from star to star—and th' long lone night was holy.

XX.

PROPHET OR POET?

Through the purple portal of that heart of thine
where sets the sun of self in sumptuous state,
pass on, with earth's full beauty insatiate,
to where no range of mountainous hopes confine
thy vision clear; thou, who dost life resign,
its whole cloud-sky of follies dissipate,
pierce on—the inmost Splendor contemplate,—
float rapturously on fluctuant deeps divine!

But, oh, return not thence, thou man of God,
leave not thy bliss to teach us; naught avails.
We yet will tread the ways our fathers trod.
Above earth's dusk-veiled peaks of purity, dumb,
stand beckoning! If thy starry summons fails,
will cries and tears and pleadings make us come?

XXI.

A HADLEY HOLIDAY

Limpid blue sky-pools shifting argent edges
 'twixt toppling billowy heaps of lucent cloud;
 hyaline shower and beryl sun-bow. Unploughed
 fallow and wheat-field green; green wayside hedges;
 meads, golden-dotted, green to the lush, quick sedges;
 diaphanous willows verdantly wind-bowed
 by slipping emerald streams, that croon half-loud
 where the ivied steeple's spire—light-etched—upwedges.

Bright, pure, sweet, tender,—England's blessed June:
 green dart of dragon-fly, flash of kingfisher;
 eglantine, honeysuckle sheeny-fresh;
 Shakespeare's and Shelley's runes to importune
 coy visitants that may not long demur
 when flesh is spirit, and the spirit flesh!

XXII.

A FEVER HALLUCINATION

In a dream-forest, o'er the moist leafmold
 above her green-fret aureole, (while drip-dripped
 the night-rain 'round) golden-eyed, rosy-tipped,
 the pale anemone shivered unconsolated
 of day, for one tear's burthen. A woe foretold
 vaguely, but irremediable, my heartstrings gripped.
 I kneeled me down, and her pure sorrow sipped
 for pity. Who might well such grace withhold?

In vain. Her petals, translucent for the wet,
 fell moth-still on her leaves, flitting to ground
 ghostwise; when on my shoulder—a soft touch!
 Our eyes, serenely in recognition met:—
 "In this vain charity the spell is found
 we sought, my son. Ah, who can love too much?"

XXIII.

THE PEAK OF VISION

"Come," whispered he, "climb at the least the nether
of thy twin peaks of vision." I clomb with him
grief-heavy, whenso my hand he loosed; to skim
(snapping asunder earth's tense spirit-tether)
on swallow-pinions over stone and heather
ahold of one another. And soon, vast, dim
the plains outspread; and my eyes for joy o'erbrim
on the upper height—in hallowing hush together.

"Son, hereto fain was I to climb in life.

Wherefore, 'tis given me hither in death to soar
with thee. Nay, deem this no delusive dream!
Ever my spirit was let of futile strife
in yonder flats. So shalt not thou blaspheme
Love that is all in all forevermore."

XXIV.

CONVALESCENCE

Who eye to eye hath gazed in th' face of death—
for him old Earth her primal splendor wears;
o'er dew-sprent meadows blithesome forth he fares,
his heart with the lambkin gamboling; his breath
difficult for the cloud that shadowèth
the hoarthorn-wooded hillside unawares,
till th' sun, forth-burst,—youth's vagrant vague despairs
vanish, as th' ghostly shadow vanisheth.

O glens of sheer moist crags, O thunder falls
foam-wild and windy, fern-fronds madly adance;
querulous bleatings in green uplands lone;
twittery loops of flight and plaintive calls
of hill-larks; O vast river-thrid expanse;—
how shall he ever your spell and sway disown?

XXV.

. AGAIN THE TROJAN BOY

"Blinkbonny" yonder a-perk on "Sunny-brae"—
at th' top of the narrow crookèd cobbly street
whose braw wee homes upscramble, snug and sweet
with pots and shrubs in happy disarray;
laburnum, syringa, wall-flower yet waylay
my spirit, and compulsively entreat
three pure glad lassies' smiles again to meet—
each proffering her fresh-pulled strawberry.

Her of the auburn glory? Her of the raven?—
Eyes sapphirine? Eyes jetty? Gay, true, kind?—
or passionate, haughty, tense, imaginative?
Not theirs the name in th' shrine of youth engraven.
Nay, pensive, tender, of loveliness undefined,
Hers rather whose wistful grey-green eyes forgive.

XXVI.

FIRST DISILLUSION

Along life's sun-bright highway in lustihead
boldly the lad strode forward mile on mile,
deriding lures of bypath, shady stile,
green-ripply pool, walled orchard, garth or stead;
for a farewell word to say,—and left unsaid.
What drunken cries the evening hush defile?
A rout of reapers, women and men, lewd, vile,
goatlike leap past with Corybantic tread.

And in the town, starved, brutish, foul, obscene,
night's outcast tide forth-gorgeth to the wharfs:—
wizen children, blear-eyed mothers, dotard dwarfs,
harlots, bloat reeling brawlers.... God, this, this
the world—thy stars from heaven behold serene?
And angels hail Thee—holy in ignorant bliss?

XXVII.

MATERIALISM

A vision came to me that asked no leave:—
With daybreak, over meadowland dewstrewn;
by streambank, or cool forest-edge, at noon,
with day's fire-passion pulsating; at eve
when glowed the west day's rapture to receive,
thro' the ripe fields, and under the gold moon
no Man! Iron monsters noiseless late and soon
stalk back and forth, and the sad harvest sheave!

Then to vast cities of men's building fled
my spirit. Lo! through close streets traffic-worn,
o'er squares, whose splendor splashing founts applaud,
no living Men,—but everywhere the Dead!
Not spectres even of creatures womanborn,—
but automatic tombs that swarm abroad!

XXVIII.

THE SAVING FAITH

Stern prophets of the law, and hermit-saints,
shall cruel mummeries chasten and atone?
By loud-mouthed creed, by coward wail and moan,
Man, hallowed? or by torturing constraints?
Woe's me, beholding you, my soul's hope faints—
wilts as a morning-glory overblown.
What? Yours—the heavenward way of old foreshown?
And Christ's—on all things lovely, your attainments?

Yet, tho' anhungered, shall no honeyed morsel
the birthright buy of a holy sweet young love.
Not Venus, thou avaunt, white Witch of Horsel!
In hair and bosom methinks coiled serpents hiss
th' doors wherethrough thy temple votaries shove
op'n lurid, on a sudden black abyss.

XXIX.

NEAR AND FAR

Medreamed a traveller toil'd the long land thro':
His path rock-hemm'd, now under trees yet bare,
o'er sun-dried sands, or treacherous stretches where
stored rains thro' dead weeds blinked; and no wind blew
to give aught life. Sore did the traveller rue
that forth he adventured on vain quests to fare,—
all things unseen of the vacant sullen stare,
till the spirit a chance look backward smote and slew.

"Barren hills of birth,—and arid tracts o'er-past,—
most wonderful for beauty? Ah, nowise so!
Well do I mind me of all your hideousness;—
even as this ground! Now, verily now I know
those hills of beckoning repose at last,
be as this present, bleak—nor more, nor less!"

XXX.

FAR AND NEAR

Medreamed a wayfarer in th' drear waste lay
incredulous of all good but death. "Believe,"
I longed to cry, "thou dost thy soul deceive;"
but dumb lips vainly to hearten him essay.
Then sudden, as for strength to help I pray—
an angel doth his home of comfort leave,
alighteth nigh, and whispereth: "Wherefore grieve,
Brother? Arise, and onward toil—today."

"Yea, and tomorrow?"—"Toil."—"And after?"—"On!
Canst thou not see how magically fair
bloometh the trodden waste? And such it is.
The ground thou treadest hath invisible share
of heavenly beauty. As shines the sun who shone,
so th' hills of birth and ultimate rest—are His!"

XXXI.

LUMINOUS HOURS

Time hath no substance save what borrowed is
of the soul's vital being. Moments dart,
huge suns, leagues inconceivable apart,
self-hung in the void abysm of centuries,
framing the real light sphere—immensities
of nothing, merely marble with black art.
And the true seers record on their sky-chart
only the suns in stellar symmetries.

What madness then to clamor for length of years
whose lapse were adding naught to naught in vain?
Ask rather, that every allotted minute burn
with all its possible luster: splendid pain
or radiant joy. So shalt thou verily earn
Eternities secure from cynic jeers!

XXXII.

THE LIVEOAKS IN MARCH

Brave battlers with the phrenzied winds of fate,
who stand, though shaken, firm-footed on cliff-ledge,
stream-border, swamp-marge, turning the fierce edge
of vehement currents, lifting the vast weight
of their mad falls on tortuous branches, great
and legioned leaves;—O Trees in March, full pledge
that our wills, resolute, can sternly wedge
blasts of adversity, and storms of hate:

Impart your spirit, that every muscle grow
gnarled, knotted, self-controlled, wherewith to thrust
redoubled onslaughts back with stubborn might;
no rage, rush, rancor, chase of worsted foe—
Ye, who war not because ye choose but must,
your roots fast riveted in their native Right!

XXXIII.

UNEARNED RETURNS

Nay, jealous souls, ye dare imagine naught
can wax fair and complete, unshapen of pain
knowingly borne and bitter? Ye entertain
(hard hearts!) no sacred hope that (though we wrought
through years of sullen misery, ere we caught
one clew to the dire labyrinth,) in th' plain
some Child may gaily weave a daisy-chain
to snare unwittingly the wisdom sought?

Comfort it were to deem our grief unshared;
our paths untrodden of many a soul, too pure
for cleansing sore, who gently in by-paths fared;—
too heart-whole for hell-remedies that cure
with pangs loneliness awful; too bright-haired
to need the halo, martyr-pains ensure!

XXXIV.

THE PARABLE OF THE DEW

In th' city square of grass an hour we spent.
What dared with obstinate glad eyes pursue
the heart, to search its moody deep? The dew.
But angry answer got it as we went:—
"Why Primacy? Why ever preeminent
(tyrants, or delegates elect) the few,—
when equal myriads might swing green, red, blue,
or gold in your breeze-rippled firmament?"

"True, and 'tis ye misdeem us, angle-bound.
Alike doth dance, in th' selfsame sun ablaze,
our emulous beauty, tho' only the sky's round
(all angles compassing) can all behold."
In vain their parable the dewdrops told:
still angle-bound, we award our blame and praise.

XXXV.

THE JUDGMENT

Not as a terror of sudden thunderclap
cometh the judgment? Nay—as sunny air,
distinguishing, in season, foul from fair;
causing to rise from sleep-stark roots the sap,
and swelling buds to burst; so, where ill hap
the dreamer slew, it leaveth him to scare
with skeleton boughs a-writhe at fruitless pray'r,—
in the grove's fellowship—a ghastly gap!

Ah, were it not ignoble of God's spring
to mock the lost? As in Bahama fields
close-bloom the lilies, unhaunted by a thought
of perished bulbs, all beautifully up-wrought
by sun and shower the blessed season yields—
God's saints alone shall stand up—blossoming!

XXXVI.

EVIDENCE OF SANITY

Crazed? Crazed! poor cringing dotard hobbling by,
stayed on thy staff—thy back with life's load bent.
Thy toothless greeting—Ha, what hath it meant—
benign light gleaming in thy colorless eye?
For, faring under summer's serene sky
when blossoms cheer with warm voluminous scent
the very blind; or, when clouds pitch their tent
o'er a dull world,—he greeteth all. Mad? Why?

Strangely it smote me then, what the sole proof
thereof;—that in all weather foul or fair
ever he smiled alike in every face.
Ha! Have we come to this,—that equal grace
to all, at all times, in God's open air,
proves maimed the mind, from man and God aloof?

XXXVII.

NOT YET

One night I woke, for at my soul's door, hark,
a gentle rap, heard surely once before,
though when, I wist not. Quick, unbar the door?
Nay, ask thou first who ventureth thro' dark
and wind and rain! Straightway I knew. No spark
on my hearth glimmered, no fitting robe I wore.
"Not now, Lord, dare I open. Knock no more.
Too vile this hovel for thee its soil to mark."

Then sudden, a deafening clangor, and the walls
of my poor house shot high—a glory seat—
a holy fane, where robed as priest I stood,
and crowned as King. Now welcome Him I would.
But the sole answer to despairing calls—
a slow dread shuffle of faint withdrawing feet.

XXXVIII.

PRESENCE

Nay, Thou art ever with us till the end.
In massy gloom like ultimate bounds of space
stern arches close us in. And face with face
of friend and stranger indistinctly blend
to a still radiance. The white candles spend
their virgin strength, uprearing, each in place,
spheres quivering of golden glow; and holy pace
keeping, the anthem's soft notes heavenward wend.

Then tears spring, and breath fails. In dumb amaze
the heart asks: "Who art Thou, that comest so
all-hallowed, in the loss of everything?
Who art Thou, speak—whom the blind feelings know?
Behold the beautiful grace of the Great King,
who walketh o'er the hushed seas of our praise!"

XXXVIII.

NO CROSS, NO CROWN

True, there be lessons hard for us to learn,
which we may understand, and do believe,
yet cannot take to heart. Still must we grieve
that we are cramped and meagre; still must burn
for freer, higher things; but ne'er discern
when we be nearer; for to self we cleave,
and, sanguine, ever again our heart deceive:
without distress some worthy bliss to earn!

And, nowise ever on pleasure's paths we meet
Love's angels soothing, sweetening, comforting.
To feel blithe spring is worth the snow and sleet;
'tis worth long rains to hear the song-birds sing;
life's bitter, if more we relish so its sweet;
the martyr's death, when close to love we cling.

XXXIX.

AUTUMN SADNESS

Sad deemest thou the glorious death of day,
when the last beams, caught by horizon-mist,
flare out in crimson, rose, gold, amethyst
the prismatic secrets of the living ray?
And sad the carnival of colors gay
wherewith, at the year's set, the leaves insist
they too are of the sunny Colorist
light-hearted children tho' the frost gainsay?

Sad is the vast laugh of the wind-clear'd sky,
the waste of shine on symmetries reveal'd
in the stripp'd boughs? Blasphemer, why proclaim
with thine own mouth thy spirit's piteous shame?
For still the brave, and the proud who dare not yield,
forefeel the bliss of dying—ere they die!

XL.

TRUE YOUTH

Dear glorious world, thou art forever still
 worthy the song of poets, and all men
 would be thy worshippers, but each his den
 inhabiteth of baser things; his eager fill
 preferring for animal appetites, that kill
 the soul of worship; free one moment, and then,
 the next, by self-blown whirlwinds sucked again
 into the vortex of the slavish will!

O never to forfeit boyhood's fresh delight
 in sunshine on gold waters, in long hills
 of leafless woodland hoar with winter's breath;
 breathless forever with the wind's swift flight,
 gladdened by the loud leap of flashing rills,
 till prospects new burst on the soul with death!

XLI.

SWEET MAID INCONSTANCY

The sparrows in a flutter whirl and quarrel;
 the maple-buds have burst in crimson sprays;
 wild peach and cherry in snowy and rosy haze
 abloom; the dogwood glows; the mountain laurel
 flings up budclusters waxen, of delicate coral;
 Spring, Spring at last, the blessèd prayed-for days
 of reasonless delight and still amaze,—
 and myth new-fabled without end or moral!

Ha! thro' her garth oread or dryad goeth
 beautiful, chaste,—and smileth to thy smile.
 Hold! Dost thou see not the moss'd precipice?
 How can she love one lover—thee—that knoweth
 ages,—and ever new wooers to win and wile
 with th' elusive azure-eyed lure of her pure kiss?

XLII.

INNOCENCE HUMAN

"Beautiful, mother? What is beauty?"—"Ask,
Child, the anemone!"—"She shivereth
in the spring-wind!"—"Hark what the azalea saith
unto the honey-bees at their sweet task;
watch the yellow wheat-seas roll, the leafage bask
crimson and gold and purple, and at a breath
fall fluttering earthward".... "Nay, is beauty death
to whoso dareth bid her brow unmask?"

The rock-edge snowily shag-fleeced, icicle-maned;
oak, beech, brier, aster, goldenrod frost-hoary,
transfigured to iridescent crystal glory
unsufferable;—these also, the sun slew.
But God Apollo—Her to his breast constrained.
then, blind for rapture of love, She blushed and knew!

XLIII.

INNOCENCE DIVINE

In red-rose bower, green-shadowed from the shine
of sky and sea, lay Psyche in dream aloof.
To twitter of bird-wooings, the leaf-roof
fluttering sun-blessèd, Eros, in the bloom-twine
(for Aphrodite's envy) of aim malign,
stood, dire;—but, tangled straightway in passion's woof,
he wooed her nightly, praying, for love's behoof,
in hallowed dark to trust his troth divine.

Soon subtle whispers wrought. Harm-boding, lo!
his godhood thro' diaphanous veil espied,—
smit-blind, heart-heavy He vanished; She, for woe
wasted, 'till Zeus (her dying prayer denied)
gave Eros sight, and Her immortal glow,—
and, seeing as God, Love smiled for holy pride.

XLIV.

FIRST SIGHT

"Make known the trysting day decreed of old.
What sign—to mark her when she passeth by?
Lovelier,—shall she woo the sensual eye
enriched with honor, of all the world extolled?
Or,—shall she, close in mystery enfold
her beauty for whoso draweth softly nigh
God-guided to her shrine? What loss if I
shall lose her, overtimid or overbold?"

Thro' the unbroken snow, on, on he pushes
obeying invisible sunny beckonings;
around him fluffy-ruffed, in ermine hoods
shine oaks ice-jewelled, and holly and hazel bushes.
Ah, met he no one in the winter-woods?
What low sweet laugh in memory birdlike sings?

XLV.

HEART'S PERVERSITY

Beholding beauty, men and Gods adore;
yet, as the closed lid dims the azure day,
so might a resolute scrutiny display
to keen leal eyes—what should no pity implore,
but ravish contemplation more and more.
From who hath not, ignobly take away?
Th' self-plight word: 'let there be love' unsay—
for that to grant full largess, fate forbore?

—"Thou—scorn to worship who doth praise command
by absolute occult prerogative?
Thou,—wield Life's sceptre in fool-hardy hand,
at thy fond dooming, grace withhold or give—
who nowise mayest Love's wisdom understand,
nor his prenatal fiat defy, and live?"

III. A VISION OF THE PASSING OF EROS AND APHRODITE

XLVI.

LOVE'S SORROW-TRANCE

Heart-lost lay Love on the wave-beaten beach.
 Eyeing him sweetly, lucent-robed, a maid
 at either hand leaned o'er her harp and played:
one instrument ebon, strung with moonbeams, each
captured distinctly; th' other in bending reach
 by th' fairer harpist,—ivory, overlaid
 with rose-flush faint for nearness chilly-afraid
to brow and bosom, of sunny musical speech.

Bare gleaming arms exquisite in blithe curves,
 and firm of grace, bloom into hands that sweep
 zephyrously soft the vibrating tense chords.
Lo, either harpist with ardent eyes observes
 (but for their greed of seeing, fain to weep)
 her own best-loved heart's lord-elect-of-lords!

XLVII.

LOVE'S AWAKENING

“O Yearning, true, what aileth, speak, thy Lord?
 O Joy, voluptuous-lipped, and wont to fling
 some bird-like snatch of witchery a-wing
to warble about thee; what dire spell abhorr'd
unkings his spirit, whom ye vowed to ward
 from influence unholy? Let upspring
 tumultuous strains his spirit to re-king—
tho' his flower-sceptre change to barbarous sword!”

Ah, Yearning, noble-browed, thy dark eyes fill
 with tears? And, Joy, thou sobbest too?
 Ye dread the wrath of madness to provoke?
Better he slay you in fury self-will,—
 or behold him piteously his death-dream woo?”
 Whereat, as from a trance,—their Lord awoke.

XLVIII.

LOVE'S SOOTHSAY OF DOOM

"In vain....too late! My throne crumblieth to dust.
A blast fanatic from charr'd wilderness
shall wrap th' whole earth in fire. Nevertheless—
reptile and vermin overlive; yea, lust
unnatural, cringing greed, and gross mistrust
wear priestly vesture; and craven man doth bless
all blasphemy of life, and lewd excess
of fury against things lovely and august!

"Oh, Aphrodite, holy Mother of bliss,
rise in thy billowy fierceness, and with death
of raging sorrow-seas wash clean the earth,
and sweep all gods and men into the abyss
of utter naught, ere they call vileness worth,
and darkness light! for lo, Love perisheth!"

XLIX.

THE TIDAL WAVE

As 'twixt twin luminous cliffs (their harps) inrolled
majestically tempestuous, up the strait,
the full sea of a harmony passionate.
And the frothy tidewave heaved, swelled, gathered hold
upon the vast deep of the stillness cold;
waxen each moment, with frantic might elate,
until up-heaped—one mountainous height of fate
to quench the sun 'mid clouds, a blaze of gold.

Suddenly crested 'twas with Aphrodite
effulgent, spread voluptuously bare.
Her eyes flashed drowsy bliss into the soul,
her arms, spray-beaded, reached in sweet entreaty.
And the wave brake in welter of despair,
then back to the sobbing bosom of silence stole.

L.

CASTING THE HOROSCOPE

What? Love, and his fair harpist-maidens drown'd,
by the awful onset of mysterious might,
foam-crested with the Mother-of-delight—
(upheaval from harmonious deeps profound—
waters under the earth, man dare not sound,)
that swirled, and swallowed all in vast affright?
Nay, a mere fever-vision of the night,—
no mystic sense for Wisdom to expound?

Yearning and Joy—Lord Love—and Beauty too
gone? And the nightmare-terror,—the desert-blast,—
hath blown forth over the charr'd earth his fire?
The age of reptile and vermin overpast,
whence cometh, speak,—seer, poet, deity,—Who
life with th' old breath of God to reinspire?

PART II.—LOVE'S SUNRISE

THE WOOING O' IT

A SONNET SEQUENCE

I.

SPEECHLESS PROPOSAL

No word of mine won thee, too well I know!—
Long silent at the sheer rock's edge we stood.
Where, in a world so beautiful, so good,
might any evil lurk? Their wilful "no"
on your lips hovered, but for the whisper low,
as to yourself:—"If love were love, how should....
old earth be heaven!" At th' blush for all love could,
low laugh'd the wind his blessèd mirth to show!

Waves of the sea, asparkle in the sun,
wild waves of leafage! Breeze-blown clear song-spray,
that gemm'd the soul! What scent-whiffs searching sweet
breath'd from sunk blossom-reefs, when—half in fun,
half earnest,—the rose I gave, you tossed away....
which the wind-driv'n song-sea wash'd back to your feet!

II.

LOVE'S HUMILITY

Hush, list, the audible waver of tender leaves,
the flutter of blossoms in the air's green-gold—
past which the throstle darts; and how the bold
shining array of spears, that fend from thieves
dew-treasures atwinkle in the grass-bed, heaves
with anger at his advent! Sweets untold
lure eye and heart; even the open harrowed mould,
purple-brown shadowed, gladdeneth whoso grieves.

Thro' acacia bloom snowing from green cloud-drifts
'twixt rose-blue lilac hedges, passeth by,—
purer than the glistening core of a dew-bead
in th' lily's sheen-white chalice lifted high
from soilure golden,—One whose innocent gifts
desire miraculously and prayer exceed.

III.

PARADISE GAINED

"O Dearest, was it thou that wentest so
in Eden unguarded, and in maiden-wise
caressed each bud that kissed thee, with dream-eyes
so serious-gay, from under brows aglow
with the candor over them? Alas! Pray, go,
go with thy smile, Love,—leave me, tho' there dies
a soul in me for every step . . . despise
thy adorer!—With sister lilies stand arow.

"For who could thy free look of trust endure,
thou queen of me? Go, with my soul's one love.
Awe seizeth me. Thee I wooed? O pride and pain!
in cloud of heaven withdraw thee! I here abjure
earth's claim to thee!" Hark!—thrush-song from above
cleft my dream sky! Nay, Full-of-Grace, remain!

IV.

PARADISE LOST

I got me an hour—my own—of the hoarded sum
Time doles out loth to his grave-delvers for pay.
I scanned my occult coin, dream-borne straightway
amidst the thrill with thee, the glimmer and hum
of bygone springtides: boughs, adventuresome,
flung warbled challenges from spray to spray,
piercing-sweet wind-whiffs censured the holiday
of squirrels and violets for th' Winter of Death o'ercome.

Paths, ferny, at random meandered and crisscrossed.
A loose-blown bloom-dance free in blithe mid-air!
When for sheer frolic wantonness: "Where," I cried,
"Hide th' old fall'n leaves—hopes crimson and gold—
that died?"
Looking reproach you faded. Ah, where, where?—
My innocent Eden of an hour was lost.

V.

SUDDEN SPRING.

What myriad spears of grass and sabres sheen
weighed down with orient dew-gems glistening!
In lairs of leafage savage-fanged between—
see, the tawny dandelion crouch to spring!
Ten-thousand hands for the breeze with amorous zeal
to fondle and kiss float daintily unwithheld!
Bride-veils of buds strive, blushing, to conceal
ambushed blue twilights of the sun expelled.
Shoots, like some delicate child, for pity ask.
Foolhardy clumps forgot their foliage shield,
and, blossom-helmeted, in the hot sun bask,—
swoon, and voluptuously their honey yield.
So sudden and sweet, and various and strange
came Spring, came love—God's wonder-work of Change!

VI.

ORCHARD OPTIMISM

O fragrant fleeciness of orchard snows!

My lavish apple-trees, your honeymoon
is at the full. The brisk air gleams and glows,
at this good hour of the sun-happy noon.

Freighted with myriad nectar-laden craft
of shiny sail, whose ports were your rich bloom,
their cargoes stolen the while the petals laughed
at jests and compliments of buzz and boom.

What all this beauty and glory for, dear trees?
This gorgeous unthrift? Have I understood?

O tell no lover, for his keen eye sees
e'en your sound hearts right thro' your ancient wood:

Ye live, ye love, and in your gladness give
your best to all—if they but love and live!

VII.

LOVE'S COMPASS.

Were I ten thousand miles from one dear face,
I were not far, meseems! For, if I sought
at night the depths of starry heavens, and caught
the rays that journeyed centuries through space
to reach me, leaving in the gloom no trace
of their swift flight;—it were a happy thought
how earth, our giant orb, had shrunk to naught,
a mote, unrecked-of in a luminous race—

half-star, half-starlit—circling round its sun
of molten gold; a bower of fragrant bloom
leaving its orbit sweet; with seas empearled,
lost for its littleness,—though dear to One
whose silver censer 'tis;—lo, We, for whom
He made it, kiss in our sweet, insignificant world!

VIII.

BODY'S ABSENCE

I may be near thee only when mine eyes
can sound the depth of thine? When to a word,
spoken in rapturous worship, come, scarce heard,
from close warm-breathing mouth thy dear replies?
Must yet the while life's chance wills otherwise,
and hand can hold not hand, bliss die deferred
till sense discern what ne'er the heart so erred
as to mistake for thee—mere soul-disguise?

Day-dreaming, faces strange draw nigh; but thou
retirest vague, of whom alone I dare
no wilful image frame. O then forgive
if knowing thee unspeakably too fair
for a more intimate revelation now,
Love in thy body's presence needs must live.

IX.

FANCY OR FACT

Ay, musing, faces strange crowd close and peer
deep in my eyes; till, if I question them
they fade in dusk, but soon, again, draw near:
why to their sight will you my soul condemn?

For you retire in some dim fastness far,
impregnable to fancy's boldest host;
and when I think of all you truly are,
no vision comes—only a shadowy ghost.

O then, my Love, indeed you must forgive
if love refuse your bodily sight to miss,
sound of your voice, caress of hand, and live
in fullest gladness only when we kiss!

Worship the work of Phidias for divine—
ye eyes who never saw the God, as mine!

X.

INDIVIDUAL INSUFFICIENCY

In fever of new-born thought I strode forth strong
to conquer all, for the shackles of brute fact
and rusted custom broke. Set free, I lacked
naught the soul craves, and drew deep breath and long
till—flesh, dissolved,—the hideousness and wrong
we know thro' it, undone,—the whole compact
mass of hostilities to man annulled,—my act
my thought seemed all there was of th' stellar throng.

"Alone! Alone!" That pitiful cry drave back
my spirit to the body's dungeon-keep,
foiled, miserable, aching, limited,
far from all things desired, in void and black;
gyved with traditional chains to work and weep!
What were it to be God, alone—and dead?

XI.

MUTUAL SUFFICIENCY

Love, mutually confirmed in hope and trust,
our spirit's flood—if of the world denied—
with jubilant swell topples its towers of pride,
and drowns in pure green deeps its fires of lust.
Yet, affable, (should it allow that dust
is naught, love all), see, swiftly home we glide
to our twain visible selves,—as ebbs the tide
sun-sparkling, to its antique limits just!

From non-existence back, with tolerant nod,
welcome the world! Through torrid rows of wheat
we stroll, and rest by streams, or breathe the air
intoxicant on dizzy peaks;—glad of this sweet
short day of limitation which we share,
till mounts the dawn of some new Morn from God.

XII.

PERSPECTIVES

Life's sea of waves foam-helmeted, rank on rank
in truceless bitter strife with fierce hoarse roar
break angrily against the rock-mailed shore,
whereon, since the sun's orb of red fire sank,
hangs hopeless gloom, some stars in mockery prank;
and ghastly sobs half-heard, are heard no more—
cries suffocated, as from who foreswore
existence, leaving hold of a floating plank!

Life seemed not such to us: lucid, serene,—
a sun-warmed lake, the fragrant land-air's skim
as swallows, wherever flies love's happy boat,
(merry wishes the oars thereof) to some dear dim
outlet of wood-edged creek from the world remote,
where kiss two lovers as—seeing the Unseen.

XIII.

WILD-GOOSE CREEK

Yea, so it was. Lost utterly to view
between twain walls of glistening reeds we stole,
following the creek's sly windings, O my Soul,
under low-arching boughs; and each well knew
the other's thoughts unspoken: I and you
silently merging to a nobler whole!
birds warble our bridal, forget-me-nots unroll
legends, on either marge, of heavenly blue!

Our vows none heard save waterlilies white,—
stars, once of old down-slidden to feel the cool
of stream and rest of fragrant obscure days.
They long foreswore the heaven's vain rivalries.
Ay, who would change, dear Stars, for heaven's high rule
first love's shy irresponsible delight?

XIV.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Nowise yon flower at th' river's edge conceives
the River's course and nature; nor explains
his will to give, by compensating gains
imaginary: unexplained she leaves
his sparkling vesture (sun, or full-moon weaves),
his unintermitted laugh in summer rains;
thirst all she knows; and the quelling of its pains
by th' únknown Lover, whom loving, she believes!

Why may not also we, of Love unknown,
divine the glory by our human share?
As when her soul yon flower sheds on the air,
feels in her bliss the bliss of the great River,
knows in herself, the indiscriminate Giver,
her petals to a dance of rapture blown?

XV.

TRUE LOVE

Oh, Love, how false we be, shallow and slight,
how rash of vow, and craven of daily deed!
Pride, vanity, ambition, profane greed
our gloom with alien glamour to unite,
assume thy Godhood's guise. Hydras whose bite
maddeneth, (whose self-propagative seed
must perish not ever wholly in man) rear, freed
at thy feigned fiat, and the soul affright.

How kennel again life's fierce hell-hounds of lust,
unleashed in youth's foolhardy over-trust?
Fire-sword in hand, the roused Will can but slay.
Grief, bosom-sister of Love, such power hast thou
to exórcise, hallow, and heal? Lead, lead even now
back to the inviolate shrine thy footsore way!

XVI.

SELF-SURRENDER

Myself, Love, have I given without reserve?
Who can grant more than all he hath? If poor,
poor be the donor's gift. Why therefore swerve
from the path of faith to love's acceptance sure?

All that was mine I gave thee, and more—my will,
for thy sake laying to man's whole birthright claim;
vowing adjustments fiercely versatile
to shifts of chance, defying fame and shame.

Ah, who hath self then in so certain hold
to make surrender instant and entire?
Let me but challenge self to fight high-souled—
Love's champion true,—to conquer or expire;

And, without blast of horn or shrill of fife,
thine the still glory of the life-long strife.

XVII.

UNSHARED FEARS

Lone night of life! Long gloom that sundereth—
when shall it pass? Wake up, Love, do not sleep.
Grim half-seen horrors thro' the blackness creep,
and grisly sounds rush by with th' chill of death.
We are not twain, with One beside? Our breath
is drawn from a vast spirit-haunted deep?
We are not ever alone in Love's safe keep?
Watch with me, thou whom heaven's truth halloweth!

Crazed am I? Ha! Thou seest, hearest nought?
Needs must I wait till light stream thro' the skies
for comfort?—friendless now for sleep's dear sake?
What? Never may our souls be nearer brought?
Starve must we for love's smile, by each personal ache
sundered, until superfluous at sunrise?

XVIII.

LOVE'S IMMORTALITY

"Ah, loving, to be loved till life have end!"
So cried we, swaying in our craft of dream
launched on the ghost-white seas that wave and gleam,
and round black crags of jutting woodland bend;
while mocking-birds, across the moonhaze, send
auroral flashes lightning-like, that seem
flute-greetings to Love's unset sun supreme:—
"Ah, loving, to be loved, sweet fellow and friend!"

Since, lo, what clefts of stifling gloom;—and One,
whom blood of the slain centuries cannot sate,
sin-manifest, gripes all with sway of hate,
bruising ideals, flower-children of Love's sun!
Ah, foolish Doubt! Death such, and Lord of Fate?
If love be—life, and love—in death begun?

XIX.

ENVIRONMENT

My dainty Tree, that flauntest gay in air
the hoar-frosts and froth-snows of New-Year tide
in challenge to the spring-sun's golden pride
of warmth; dost Thou, white solitary, share
my joy in thee: alone so frail and fair,
among coarse rough-bark red-oaks, that deride
thy alien useless beauty;—every side
their envious sombre frown, and scornful stare?

"Full well her worth she know'th," one, passing, saith:
"Proud so to shine unrivalled; yea, alone!"
But at my side, one nigher to thee akin,
sigheth and murmureth, awesmit, under breath:—
"Where beauty is scorned, and holiness unknown,
believe, and blossom?" Ah, heavenly heroine!

XX.

BRIDAL DREAM

One huge perpendicular peak stands islanded
in torrid plains to the sky's smoldering verge.

A giant scales it, maddened by the scourge
of hate for a world stark and gross and dead.
Into the blue he lifts his blazing head
and shades his eyes. Below, all things should merge
in glare unsufferable:—a snow-soft surge
of cloud sleeps prone upon the wind instead.

Beautiful 'neath her hair's flood of rich gloom
her glory with tumultuous longing heaves,—
which, terrible, his love as lightning cleaves,
dissolving in a sunlit storm of bliss,
whereat the waste world bursts in song and bloom. . . .
And the Dreamer wakes a dreaming Bride to kiss.

XXI.

THE MOTHER

O beautiful wife, lying so still and pale
in the godly patience of true womanhood;
what wondrous smile as tho' in sooth we could
to thee be something! Thy wistful looks exhale
a fragrance heavenly, as lily of the vale
or dewy wildrose white. And O how good
to watch thee scan—while near thee hidden I stood—
our little One—vision for which words fail!

Thou being such, the worship my soul pays
to be called love, too pitiable it seems!
My glory still this ruinous debt to own,
and thine to be above the reach of praise;
whom, as the sun, Love's bliss rewards alone,—
the prodigal spending of thine own bright beams.

XXII.

LOVE'S MELODY

"What age, my dearest, would I have thee seem
in heaven?" If God doth grant the spirit's prayer,
mine be it to evoke (absolute swayer
o'er divine seas of memory and dream)
thee, thee of each successive glory and gleam:
her that doth beggar—extravagant repayer
of love's poor gift; her, ravishing gainsayer
that doth, denying, grant the grace supreme.

Mine th' apple-cheeked, sloe-eyed, and cherry-lipped—
the Child; and mine the lithe, blythe, serious Maid;
and mine the Mother hallowed of strange joy;
the rhythm and melody of thee,—that dripped....
star-dew from mystic Rose that cannot fade!—
So would I, all eternities employ.

XXIII.

LOVE'S HARMONY

But thou dost fear that such high play should tire,
conjuring ever thee, thee, only thee?
Hope's twinkle of starshine, dance of sunny glee,
gloom of despair, white flash of noble ire,
dusk of great awe, dawn-raptures that expire
in glare of common day, moon-mystery
of twilight-longing; these should breed ennui,
often recurring, till they slew desire?

Then let there also be, Dear, counterpoint
of manifold resource, subtle surprise:
thee, thee, thy multitudinous selves, the notes
in ever new procession; and every wise—
Thee simultaneously from choric throats
to ever new joy-miracles conjoint!

XXIV.

INCARNATION

Fool, who the body of honor due deprives!
All beauty but reveals the spirit's urge
and will divine, that sweet extremes shall merge
in fashioning new forms for lovelier lives.
'Tis Love in flowers breweth honey, and Love in hives
storeth it. Ever one old splendor's dirge
another's birth-song! The creative surge,
foam-crested, still with roar of joy arrives.

O body, beautiful, pure, rapturous, warm—
who would in some seventh heaven to be up-caught,
insult thy glory; thine, visible holy form
of noblest soul, and extreme recompense,
oracular to sane enamored sense
of marvel and mystery too high for thought?

XXV.

LOVE'S SILENCE

Nay fool, poor fool! Th' perfervid lover's prayer—
It is not sacrilegious. God to man
must manwise speak his mandate; else who can
on earth hear, heed? Not He the heart's bewrayer;
of love, He clothed in beauty, disarrayer!
But wouldst thou verily end what He began,
out-thrusting forth the fury under ban,
whence flesh and soul, Accuser, and World-slayer?

Not so deluded we. Thy lover asks
thee bride, friend, comrade, Beatrice, Aspasia,
immaculate, adorable,—uttermost bliss
of body and spirit—as heaven for all vain tasks
of earth-life striven-in; and as euthanasia
(if death be utter death) thy dying kiss.

A VISION OF NEW HELLAS

TO THE MUSE

Great was the joy of vision—the surprise
of its first flash upon my spirit's eyes;
happy the prospect of the poet's work,
and proud the will no slightest task to shirk
imposed by One, who gave me to behold
part of His beauty—seen by men of old
in Hellas. Nor could difficulties shake
resolve—however sore the throbbing ache
of fevered brow and temples. Whence endued
was thus my soul with sacred fortitude?
From whom the patience, till the stubborn brain,
once more obedient to the spirit sane,
in ecstasy toiled? From thee, O best One, came
the best: thy praise reward sufficient, and thy blame
in hesitant look and tone, supplying will
for onset new. Thou who dost so fulfill
all prayers of mine for truth, beauty, and good,
in thine own self, thy blessed womanhood,
dream-radiant eye, and subtly smiling lip,
making earth heaven in the dear fellowship
of thee and me,—thine be the reader's thank
if never the song to ground exhausted sank,
if on it sped, still spurning baser things,—
strong pinions spread of twin imaginings,
to leap the chasms that broke athwart its course;
thine be all joy therein—mine the remorse
that with such help the song should not surpass:
all songs sung hitherto. My shame, alas!—
yet as thine eye, O Dearest, I consult—
in what is thine shall not my spirit exult?

THE FORESONG

I.

The civilization of his day, (symbolized by his city in most odious atmospheric conditions,) fills the poet with a disgust of living. Yet he climbs a hill (of Hellenic culture) thence, to take, above the smoke-pall of sordidness, his last look at the heaven of all encompassing beauty.

*Out of the town,
drench'd by a penetrant
wind-driven dust of rain,
fast-gluing to the walls soot-flakes
from grimy house-tops swept;
paving courts, alleys, streets
with a viscous mire; compacting
the smoke-roof, propped by towers,
spires, factory-chimneys, that threaten
under the mass enormous
to topple, and smother all life
with gloom and stifling dismay;
out of the dusk, wet, slime
of the hideous town
my soul was fain to escape—
stand on some dominant height
for a moment,—behold
once again the heav'n bare,
vibrant with sun,—
or die!*

II.

Industry cannot of itself seem noble, nor justify existence. Its modern proportions but belittle the soul.

*For, one forge
of Hephaestos, the lame God,
seemed modern civilization.
A million anvils ring
with the blows of his sledge; to view
dissolving, on axles of light,
the huge wheels dizzily gyrate;
vast,—as of Titans, in Tartaros
fetter'd,—adamant knees
protrude, fold, stretch
with an agony rhythmical;
and the force of their breath
convulsive, the electric might
of their anger, by unwearying pull and push*

*scintillant beams convey
in the service of
pigmy man!*

III.

*For, modern civilization
seem'd but the temple profane
whose God,—Hermes of liars and thieves!
Yards, choking with goods, his courts
of high praise; ware-houses grim
his places most holy; throng'd marts,
(the booths, his altars!) shops, stores,
and their counters for sacrifice
constant—the sacred resorts
of his popular worship. The streets
his, with scurry of vehicles,
whirr, rattle, roar
of cars that transport
votaries from shrine to shrine.
On tracks, from all regions convergent,
snort, bellow,
shriek, jar with their train,
locomotives, to freight quick and dead
at phrenetical speed for His sake
alone, whose victims, whose slaves,
whose merchandise are all!*

And trade completes the degradation which industry commences, till the things of the spirit are held cheap because unfit for barter and sale.

IV.

*Hephaestos, artificer lame,—
Hermes, covetous, cunning,—
Gods of our time,
what have ye made of the race
once human? No beauty, no valor, no love!
Industry?—trade?—an ignoble war,
man clutching the throat of his fellow
to compel him disgorge his gold!
Dishearten'd, dispirited,
yet with one hope unavowed in my soul,*

*Arraigning these
only Gods, these
effectively dominant
ideals of his
fellows, he did not
admit to himself
his hope of finding
a consolation
in philosophy.*

*I climb'd the steep mount of culture
Hellenic, for vision of better things—
or, a scornful farewell to the world.*

V.

*But when above
the smoke-pall of
sordidness, he
found the heaven
shrouded by vast
rain-clouds of phil-
osophic pessimism
and of religion
falsely so called.*

*Far roll'd soon under my sight
astonish'd, the black voluminous surge
of smoke—drear sky of who drudge
in the city below. But, up-looking, my soul
cried passionate for instant release:
no rift of the heaven so achingly crav'd!
Overhead, a vague expanse—
infinite cloud,—
the general despondency thick
atheistical, whence—cold
wind-driven dust of rain!
Nought, nought,
for the baffled eye of the spirit
but the grey illimitable,
shredding out rags of willess despair
loathly loose
into the flood of crass murk
infernal, whose tumbling waves at my feet
froth'd pitch! .*

A SONG OF SONGS

DEMETER APPEARETH

I.

Behold
(if lore of names and of powers
godly thou have, to assure
fear-fascinate eyes)
and declare,
O rebellious soul,
Who she be that walketh
the welter of reek, as glebe
blast-plough'd, gust-harrow'd, rain-sown?
Mark
(though shrouded in ample, grey
mist-robcs,) how shy
moves She, and hesitant,—
wont to solitudes only of fields
for miles under noon-sun awake,
where crickets, incessant
make hysterical mirth
lest whispers, (o'erheard from lips
not of flesh in shuddering, heavy wheat-ears,)
dismay the silly folk small
who flutter, creep, bask in the weeds
or the seams of the tolerant ground.
What shine—
wistful, unearthly
not glad,—in her eyes?
(Yet so, under banks dusk-green
of heart-shap'd shields, fretted
at edges, hang not the violets
of coy delight their sweet heads?
peep they not timorous, tear-twinkling
at foot-sore passers-by?)
Yea, and not sorrowful
seemeth her mouth:

*There appeareth to
the poet a vision us
of the goddess of
harvest-home, who
seemeth comfort-
ed of some dole
by a spiritual so-
licitude for the
weal of others,
and self-oblivious
beneficence.*

kind, as of one who her best
giveth, for meed nowise
of devotion or praise, but of strenuous
necessity,—love, so great that it knoweth
itself not, simple,
serene!

II.

*The poet, awed by
the deity, is
drawn by the
mother in her, and
recognizes the
great Demeter of
Eleusis.*

Who art thou, lofty of stature,
noble of countenance,—hands
extended as proffering solace?
Mother of peace by endurance
won, and of plenty wrested
thro' sweat and patient abiding
from soil else barren, I know thee!
Dumb with awe
at thy presence, shadowy
Goddess, (whose virginal breast
pillowed the turbulent
sea-lord, earth-shaker, Poseidon,)
dumb should I be, undesirously
reverent, save that thy mother's
palpitant heart, of tenderness
infinite for comely Persephone,
draweth, Eleusynian Demeter,
to thee!

III.

*The apparition or
the poet's own
spirit (which it be
he cannot say) ad-
dresseth itself to
console him,*

Nigher she came,
loving lips parted, and words
sorrow-wise, spake she of counsel,
of comfort holy (repose
in tone, in gracious demeanor,
in wonderful gaze benign;)
so, that who utter'd I knew not
(a voice in my soul? or the speech
of her eyes, of her mouth?)
the soundless confession of truth:—

IV.

"Rightly, O son, thou deemest
 most ancient of woe-begone, loving Ones
 me! Is there gorge
 of distress impassable, heath snow-bound
 by savage winds harried, sun-scorch'd
 stony waste, untrod of my feet
 in the day of cruel bereavement
 bruise'd sore, and bleeding? Hot tears,
 inconsolable, wept I not
 ages long?—Hearken my tale!
 The queen of plough'd lands, purple-mantled
 at dawn of the year, (through the quiet
 winter-nights wooed) to the storm-god of sea
 a daughter I bore. From babe
 in few days (or so seem'd they)
 miraculously budded she, bloom'd she
 to maidenhood gracious,—as sunbeams
 light-footed, like wells that up-bubble
 laughter-brimming. For hers,
 all bursting buds; hers, all uncurling
 fronds tender; all leaves, (golden-pale
 ere the sky of its blue tint them green,)
 hers alone: most beloved, most lovable,
 yea, and of spirits the loveliest. Yet she,
 daughter of Goddess
 immortal, (mighty to bless, to curse
 with abundance or famine,) yet she,
 daughter of God
 terrific, (whose wave-steeds foamy-man'd neigh
 as they run, paw, leap, fierce-rending
 with bitless mouths the wrecks of stoutest-bow'd ships,)
 she, she, raped of the fearful gloom,
 bride of death, queen of hell? She
 not undying? Bare wold, cold flood
 eternal?—yet she—
 the blossom sea-father'd, earth-mother'd, she, she
 perisheth?
 E'er under heav'n hath woman, hath man

*telling the nature
 of Demeter's im-
 mortal sorrow,
 which sprang of
 her joy in love,
 and her love of
 joy,*

known pangs that I suffer'd not
 direr, acuter? The evil-eyed, gloating,
 my torment, insatiate, beheld. Not mine
 the refuge of silence that brooks
 no intrusion; to life
 without end, to despair
 everlasting, doom'd!"

V.

*and also how she
 was comforted in
 her bereavement
 by a vision of the
 joy at the core of
 things, and all en-
 folding,—a joy
 sincere, unironical,
 self-communica-
 tive.*

"But out of the bed-rock of grief, stark,
 gelid,—no Zeus-hurl'd bolt
 could shatter,—of its own extreme
 tension asunder cloven, forth-gush'd
 Solace, a crystal-pure fount, that quench'd
 (as I stoop'd me fever-hot lips
 to cool) the death-thirst. Then I hated no more
 the order unchanging of causes, the chain
 link in link of events without first
 without last. Then, no more
 wept I, perversely, to see the sun's vigor
 of youth unabated; and over the shift
 and drift of low cloud, star-radiant still
 the blue firmamental,
 unwrinkled with thought. Then, then
 I perceiv'd, the Rapture (in all that is
 latent, and far outreaching beyond
 the uttermost nought) implied for cark and care
 human no scorn derisive:—reckless
 of mind-fret and heart-ache (strange
 to itself, and irrelevant) wherefore?—if not,
 in moment of passion's lull, hush
 of fury's exhaustion,—audibly sweet
 as a peace divine to intrude
 at length in the sufferer's soul?"

VI.

*Learning that
 death is the author
 of life's glory, she*

"Aidoneus! Aidoneus
 Him I had curs'd, bride-deflowerer,—mocker
 at sport with rent petals, dead leaves,—

blighter,—scatterer—
 spurner underfoot of the fair—
 whom never at heart (since hateful, sullen,
 foul,) I believ'd to be God,—in his very
 Self appear'd to me then, of living things
 maker; deviser of form, and of increase
 in might; cherisher, fosterer
 silent of beauty; whose mystical touch
 worketh wonders forever! Astonish'd,
 yet more I marvell'd that ever
 woe-misted these eyes of mine
 so blind became to mis-read
 the myth of the seasons recurrent. For, lo,
 is it not He who clippeth of wheat,
 of rye, the tresses ripe-sunny? and who
 if not He with flail of affliction
 from full sheaf driveth, (relaxing
 the hold of kindly husks) the bare grain?
 And whose if not His the harsh breath,
 to shrill tunes of scorn, as flurry
 of fine snow whirling aloft, under drear skies ashen,
 the chaff? From my hand, tight-clench'd, 'tis He
 snatcheth the choicest for seed
 in darkness to waste, damp-swollen,
 and rot? Yet who if not He (as the corn
 under sun, for nurture of men
 ground, cometh in blush of maid, glow of youth, battle's might,
 cometh in mother's milk, joyous cry, laugh of babe,)
 who if not He in due season
 biddeth arise the new year's
 vaster harvests, ghost-pallid? Aidoneus, who,
 if not Thou
 God of death?"

*wep't no more for
 the lost Perseph-
 one.*

VII.

"Wherefore, summer's Goddess, a rite
 faithful and holy of loyal
 sons I exact, whensoever thro' rich loam
 by steer-drawn plough the furrow is cut:—
 with solemn jubilation, therein

*And that mortal
 grief might have
 immortal cure,
 she shared her
 heavenly wisdom
 with such as ex-*

*perienced anguish
like hers.*

newborn shall be laid an infant—the token
that life (yea theirs, as of wheat, as of rye)
upspringeth from th' gloom, death-begotten. For my soul,
when the sense it conn'd of the mystery
erst indiscernible, cull'd (dejected
no longer) wholesome fruit—heart's ease,
quiet cheer of well-doing—to men
grief-smit the deep lore imparting in grove
Eleusynian. And none whom I taught
fear'd darkness thereafter, nor dust, nor cold sweat
at the close. Aidoneus, of terrors
grim King, most ruthless I showed to them. Her,
(whom folk in their folly awful
fabled, the daughter of Styx stagnant river
corrupt, inexorable Queen
of Hades,) to all I revealed as none
other than pure Persephone, her lap
heap'd with red poppies—oblivion
of ache, of vexation,—yea and with white
poppies,—dream-hopes of a whiter
dawn. So the grief,
O my son, thenceforth at parting
in glee of welcome is swallowed. The end
lo! no end,—but start
more exultant; the cycle of life no tedious
round,—a ring for processional dance;
and behold, even I, Mother Earth, the venerable,
wax youthful again;
and singing, singing with a myriad myriad
stars through the thrill'd heaven's vastitude whirl,
blissful; for, ever to Aidoneus content
I surrender my children, whom Aidoneus again
forever restoreth
more mighty, more fair!"

DIONYSOS COMETH

a

The words of Demeter
in my ears still tremulous,
persuasively sweet;—wind-wafted
from the mingling of cloud-sky dun
and the unquiet sea of dinginess—
Voices as of maidens, for an alien grief
tear-dew'd, but at heart
life-glad, came gradually
closer and clearer:—

*From the hori-
zon's edge cometh
sound of singing.*

β

Why sigh we and cry we, as nigher we draw to her,
appall'd by her tallness and awful demeanor?
The violence and silence of Hades are law to her,
yet wailing seem'th sweeter Demeter to thee,
weeping than smiling, howling than laughter!
Griev'd One, bereav'd One, thy child—hast thou seen her?
Time now brings showers; yet unfailingly after
calls the gay hours to delight us, yea, dry away
tears from all eyes, while our doubt-clouds fly away
from the bright of the sky, and are drown'd in the sea!

*When the words
were intelligible
they prove to be
a greeting to
Demeter;*

a

So fresh were the Voices
and so full, youth-cheery,
irresistible;—smiles straight followed
in the wake of the sage words sung
to a distinct rhythm of dance;
and the mother of Persephone, the gracious,
replied
sweet-smiling to me.
Once more, swell'd closer
the melodious chorus:—

*but the singers, it
is clear, ignorant
of her comfort,
misconceive her
mood;*

β

*and, wearying of
lament, resume the
praise of their
chosen deity, as
though the saluta-
tion to another
might seem dis-
loyal.*

Ho! go you and show you a holier joy in him,
employ you your voices in boisterous hollos,
for know you not, know you not Semele's boy in him,
with whom you would toy once, you coy Ones, of old?
Noisily extol him, lowlily sue him!
Woe doth he sow and a joy-crop follows.
Lo! you owe homage and honor unto him!
Grow you, O grow you, O vines of his choosing,
flow you, O flow you, O grapes of his bruising,
to the glory alone of your God of the bold!

α

*The sire of their
God, acknowledges
his glorious son;*

Then knew I, unseen yet,
the devout blithe singers.
But suddenly, loud roar'd Zeus,
the cataclysmal. His clouds broke, cloven,
and a bolt clear'd the atmosphere.
Luminous the azure of the heavens through the rift
burst happily in;
sun-showers stream'd laughing
from the frayed storm-edges.

γ

*whereupon the
Maenads (female
devotees of Diony-
sos) appear, and
encircle Demeter,*

The surge of crass murk
froth'd pitch no longer:—
bronze-red, ablaze,
hurtling to foam of gold,
spurting quick spray of fire,
tumbling in glory.
For, leaping and crying,
a rout of wild women,
with faun-skins loose-vested,
limbs gleaming, locks flying in whirl
orgyastic, surrounded the mother
majestic and calm:—

δ

He cometh, he cometh, ('Tis he! 'tis he!)
 young again from barbarous Thracia,
 to Icaria, the wild; o'er the isles of the sea
 from Phrygia, the rocky, and Asia!

*singing of the ex-
 pected advent of
 Bacchus;*

From the gloom
 of the tomb
 he came, he came—
 God of gush,
 God of flow,
 the same, O the same
 God of flush
 and of glow,
 and the uproar of flame.

δ

Oh! heard ye not, heard ye not told and retold
 the story of his wonderful birth?
 begott'n of the Highest, he is God of the bold;
 of the Fairest born, God of their mirth!

*of his miraculous
 divine begetting
 and of his beauti-
 ful human birth;*

Speak out,
 shout, shout
 his name, his name!
 God of wine,
 God of fire,
 the same, O the same
 of divine
 mad desire
 of the death-leap, and fame!

ε

Blessed Semele,—virgin
 who daredst to die
 thy glory to merge in
 that of Zeus the most high,—
 passion-whirls that we surge in
 thy feet cannot wet;
 rejoice, O white virgin,
 where suns never set!

*of his virgin
 mother, now be-
 yond carnal stain;*

*of Zeus's wooing
and recognition by
her,*

The God of heav'n saw thee
and lov'd thee, and wooed;
lest his glory o'er-awe thee
as shepherd he sued;
but thou knewest him, Bride of God,
thro' the human disguise,
sweet Joy of God, Pride of God,
Light of his eyes!

*of her rapture in
the God.*

"O Zeus, who didst fashion it—
my body be thine,
so thou flash forth, God passionate,
thy glory divine."
In delirious surrender
of rosy-hued flesh
Thou didst cry: "Slay with splendor,
and create me afresh!"

*The Maenads
see their God
a-far, and forget
his birth in him.*

He cometh, he cometh! 'Tis he, even he,
son of Semele!—Hail, Dionysos,
from the low, and the mean, and the base to set free,—
from ourself, to thy height to entice us!
God fearless,
God peerless,
O come, O come!
At thy glance
who, O God,
can be dumb? can be dumb?
Tread the dance,
that ye trod,
to flute, pipe, and drum!

HYMN TO DIONYSOS THE ELEMENTAL

I. *A young Maenad singeth*

Stay
near us
to cheer us,
dire
God
of the panting heat!
Pray
hear us,
hear, hear us!
Fire-
shod
be thy alighting feet,
that in spasm
volcanic
thy mount may awake;
rend open a chasm,
and with panic
earth shake!
From the crater,
Titan-hater,
let the lava-streams fall,
and char
near and far
as they luridly crawl.
In thick dark
sow the spark
to enkindle the pine:
higher, higher
leap thy fire
with a thunder divine!

*A young Maenad
praises Dioynsos as
God of elemental
fire.*

II. *Semi-chorus of young Maenads*

*All the younger
Maenads laud him
as God of raging
water-streams,
and of luxuriant
plant-growth.*

God of swollen springs bursting; torrent-roar of wild force,
uprooting the trees, and damming its course; —
of floods, boulder-rolling, to the plain down-hurl'd; —
of the landslip that crasheth on a slumbering world; —
Dionysos, thy ravage
at length hath an end:
for thy violence savage
is the wrath of a friend.
Lo! thy vast vegetation
upshooteth to cloak
the seared devastation
with pine, laurel, oak.

III. *An older Maenad singeth*

*An older Maenad
prays to Dionysos
as God of secret
treasures.*

O God of the mysteries hid below ground,
of the bed
of thy red
gold gloom-hoarded,
keep them ever impenetrable to light and to sound,
from the smutch
of the clutch
of the sordid.
So, the mystical treasures in deeps of man
be thine, O God, only with glad eye to scan.
Yet, at times (as thy river
Pactolus
of old
for thy faithful adorer
wash'd up nuggets of gold)
when the anguish grows sorer
than the proud soul can bear,
with glimpse of our God-self, Life-giver,
console us,
and vanquish this human despair!

IV. *Semi-chorus of older Maenads*

Man from good unto better must go,
from better, e'er on to the best:
thy guest in the life that we know
is in death, that we know not, thy guest.
God, marshaller of spirits victorious
too great for earth longer to house,
lead us, lead us to a world more glorious
there to revel with thee and carouse!
Thy grape-blood burns in our veins,
and with madness our brains
are on fire! on fire!
We rise with thee, God, from the real
to explore the eternal ideal —
inspire us, inspire us, inspire!
Heaven's freedom from earth-bonds that bind us
let our spirits, O God, anticipate.
For a moment the shadows that bind us
dissipate! dissipate! dissipate!
We follow thee on, we follow —
skim the air more swift than swallow!
O ye wicked, ye fools, he hath sapp'd your
foundations of carnal joy!
Your lies no more shall win you us:
ours, ours the ecstatic rapture
of the Gods (Evoi! O Evoi!)
the rapture of onrush continuous!
(Evoi! Evoi!)

All the older Maenads extol him as the God of immortality and spiritual vision.

V. *All the Maenads in chorus*

All hail to the God who died
of man's woe, in man's stead,
now deathless and glorified,
King of the blessed dead!
Maenads, wave, wave your
green-flaming thyrsus

Together all the Maenads hail him as the Titan-slain God who secureth everlasting blisses for the faithful.

as you leap for his praise in the whirl of the dance:
hail, hail him the Saviour
of incredible mercies,
Lord eternal of fate, God the master of chance!

THE COLLOQUY

I.

*Demeter maketh
known unto Dionysos
her office of consoler,
eliciting the human out of
the torture of mankind.*

Their hymn of worshipful praise
declaring the godhead
occult of their Lord,
to a close devout sung,—
The God of the heavenly dew,
a stillness ensued; and Demeter, lifting
her eyes to those of the flush'd
divine youth, became
ancient in look, all the light
of her wisdom veil'd.

—"Art thou

Demeter, mother of comfort from sorrow
for men?"

—"Yea, son,"

answered she mild, "by cruel
hardship ever the good
from the ill are dissever'd. Persephone
fair, from the grave returneth whither
she went with all mortals
down; but the foul
wax old in their death, and each
(as memory in turn effaceth
memory, recall'd in the mind)
fades utterly out of the world.
Wherefore, my worshippers so
teach I pain
and bereavement to bear, that they rise
from brute up to man—
his stature, dignity, calm."

II.

"Well,"—retorted the beauteous
 youth, his eyes as he spake
 awful with shine
 inhuman,—“Mother,
 well hast thou said. To man
 thou leadest; but I,
 unbeheld, drive on
 thy worshippers up to the god.
 Aidoneus,
 King of death, King of hell,
 is none other than I, who greet thee,
 Dionysos,
 Lord of life, Lord of earth,
 leader of the blessèd to the highest
 heaven. The good, who survive
 the law of thy Deity, they
 my quarry are, mine Dionysos
 Zagreus, pitiless huntsman, torturer,
 flesh-feaster, blood-quaffer, the barbarous
 God.
 Bruis'd, crush'd,
 shall the grape-berry be; whence, pouring,
 the life-juice transmute I to fluid
 fire!
 Yea, the hero, strong, brave,
 soul-fast, faithful, upright,
 unto death I pursue, that in death
 deified,
 they I maddened with murderous
 hate shall adore Him, (in death
 life-glories forth-showing they dream'd not of) me
 in Him whom they slew, even me
 beholding, their God; and a love
 fervent for Him, shall breed of remorseful
 hearts—issue divine,
 heroes innumerable as stars in the heaven!”

*Dionysos replieth
 that his function
 is ever to express
 from the human
 the godly. He (life
 and death being
 mystically one)
 identifyeth himself
 with Aidoneus
 (Hades, Pluto)
 and setteth forth
 his awful anthro-
 pophagous rite.*

HYMN TO DIONYSOS, THE HERO-GOD

I.

Semi-chorus of older Maenads

*Enthusiastic, the
Maenads celebrate
their winter orgies
in the mountains
to arouse the
sleeping God of
natural life who
would else let the
earth perish with
him.*

What is it he said?
Hath he fled? Hath he fled?
Dionysos, the Hero-God, dead?
dead? dead?
Up, up to the barren hill-pass
swept of winter-blast chilling, barefooted, barehead,
ere manhigh the snow-drifts amass!
We will drink not nor eat,
but the hard-frozen ground
we will beat
with our feet,
and Pan-hoof shall pound
to drum and shrill fife
till the Dead come to life!
Bromios! Bromios!
hark, the timbrel's hoarse roar,
wail of wind, hoot of owl,
scream of eagle, wolf-howl,—
wilt thou lead us, boisterous God, no more?
To the rhythm of our phrenzy, ye north-blasts, shriek;
about us, ye snow-drifts, wheel
and reel;
till (the death-spell too weak
for the God whom we seek,)
He shall rise and his glory reveal.
Lo, death is dead,
and his spell is sped!
Thou hast conquered our mortal shame!

Let the cymbals clash,
and the avalanche crash
as we summon Thee, God, by name.

Semi-choruses of Pans

1

We Pans, we Pans,
to butt and to gore
we have horns that are sore,
and our legs are a goat's not a man's.
Beware, beware,
with our nails
we tear,
and we lash
with our barbèd tails.
Like beasts, we rend
with our teeth the rash
who Zagreus, the huntsman, offend.
We have ears as the lynx,
and a fool! who thinks
from the leer
of our eyes to escape;
for the snow-flake's fall
miles off we hear,
and a leaf-shadow's shape
we spy through the thick night's pall.

*The Pans glory in
their deformity
and in their su-
pernatural powers;*

2

Woe! woe! to the Man —
though thou send
him —
who cometh, great God, in thy place:
we will butt, each Pan,
gore and rend
him,
and tear him limb

*and threaten the
emissaries of their
God who shall
dare, obedient to
his hest, stand in
his room.*

from limb!
devour his flesh torn,
lap and gulp his blood spill'd,
till we free
from the mask thy face,
and see
the quiet smile of high scorn,
and thy spiritual eyes fire-fill'd!

Full chorus of Pans

3

*Yet they show that
in the tragic death
the God is glorified
and the hero
made truly his re-
vealer.*

For blessed, thrice-blest,
the death that reveals thee;
of thy fury possess'd
the great life that feels thee:
and deep, deep
the abysses be
of terrific despair,
that steep, steep
may the blisses be
whose peaks cleave the air!
In the tragic death-strife
from the blood-drunk sod
springs the beauty of life
that showeth Thee, God.

HYMN TO DIONYSOS, THE HERO-GOD

II.

Semi-chorus of the younger Maenads

1

O Pans, in the waste hill-gorges
not vain were our mid-winter orgies:
for his earthquake answers
the tramp-
stamp
of dancers,
in new-got strength
appearing at length:
Lord of fire, water, gold,
wine, song,
dance, mirth;
the great God of the bold
and the strong
of the earth!
O flute, O drum,
O tabor and cymbal,
back you'll us
bring
with loud scream, and leap nimble
to the ancient hill-top bald!
Iacchos the oft-shouter, is come
whom appall'd
we call'd,
yea, come with miraculous
Spring.
He hath sent a
year of plenty
that his faithful should fast not.
The spell
of dark Hell —

*Enthusiastic,
the Maenads an-
nounce the vernal
resurrection of the
God of natural
life, and praise
him.*

we knew well
 it could last not:
 Iacchos hath overcome it!
 (how else could the strife result?)
 Up, up the sheer summit,
 you Bacchic rout,
 to exult,
 as ye raise
 the shout
 of his praise,
 in the heat of his mystical cult.

2

*They describe his
 advent to the
 heights, athwart
 the flats, and the
 wild rush of his
 worshippers to
 meet him with
 shout and dance.*

On a chariot swift-drawn of panthers and leopards
 at dawn he appeared to the terrified shepherds,
 Silenos alone for fellow!
 and, behold,
 the meadow he dashed thro'
 grew gold,
 as his god-glory flashed thro',
 with narcissi sunny-yellow;
 and roses wine-purple, flame-tawny, lily-white,
 burst abloom in his lightning track;
 the vines hung big clusters of berries, in a night,
 grapes glaucous, grapes sanguine, grapes swarthy blue-black;
 the trees of the orchard, the trees of the forest
 became quick-quivering, high-roaring, fire-tongues of green.
 'Gainst death with life's beauty, O Iacchos, thou warrest
 the whole world to make lustrous, tho' thyself be unseen.
 Wherefore in festal glee, brandishing torches
 aflame, thy mad maidens (as pours the volcano
 a lava-stream lurid that seethes and that scorches)
 to the valley
 forth-sally
 to the plain, to the plain, O!
 to meet with laughter, peals upon peals,
 jubilant hollo and yell, O!
 Iacchos the God who our rapture feels
 and Silenos, his master and fellow.

Chorus of Satyrs

1

Not one of us, fierce quaffers
though we shamble, totter, stagger,
not one of us, coarse laughers,
in the train of the God is a lagger.
We are goat-thighed, like Pans, and lascivious,
obscene in our humorous jests; .
yet, O Maenads, of your lips why give ye us,
of your waists, no joy, and your breasts?
Too fleet of foot, agile, alert, you
fly on in your spirited folly.
Yet, O Maenads, no Satyr would hurt you,
bliss-drunken, and amorous-jolly.

The Satyrs pronounce themselves, for all their baseness, true servants of the God.

2

Little know ye your God if ye scorn us:
your God, He also is ours;
for Silenos's sake love hath he borne us
and a function assigned to his powers.
Dionysos, the only God, jealous,
He hateth a rival base.
Then who be men's idols, tell us,
whose favor they seek, and grace?
Ours, ours is the God's commission
to shatter their images,
cleave faith from superstition,
distinguish what seems from what is!
Stalk forth thou bragging claimant
to worship! 'Tis we who shall settle
the debt to thee owed of the fool.
We must make thee enough, yea quick payment
in truest, most precious metal
of comical ridicule.
The people with laughter we initiate
in the mysteries of heroism divine —
would ye wish yet more gods to propitiate
having known once the supreme God of wine?

For, as tragedy arose from the anthropophagous feast, so comedy began with the drunken revel. Theirs also is a high, if not the highest, office.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

I.

*The effect of the
hymn of worship
showeth itself in
a revelation to
their eyes of the
God's glory.*

Lo! while
the elder Maenads, intoxicate, chanted
the winter-praise boisterous
of Bromios; while
the Thracian huntsman (harrier remorseless
of human game, Zagreus, man-eater)
the Aegipans ferocious
loud lauded in madness of savage
rites gory; the while
maiden Maenads, grief-ignorant,
of Iacchos, earth-quickener, soul-kindler,
ecstatal sang; and while
the Satyrs, mock-awesome, Dionysos exalted
(foster child of Silenos, their chief,
for the exhilarant laugh
of his mouth;— behold!
in his votaries' midst, the one
Lord of their various moods
shone transfigured— and, ringwise
enviored with multiplied visions
emanative, drave
Maenads, Pans, Satyrs back,
extending their circle of worship, the more
at the center his Godhead forthflashed.

II.

*For from Dionysos
emanate the Dry-
ads, the Oreads,
the Naiads, the
three Charities,
and the Muses
three—various as-
pects of his deity
separately embod-
ied.*

Of bush and of tree the chaste spirits
into being first leapt, with leafage
arrayed, happy Dryads, blossom-crown'd,
their arms all together
upthrown, wildly waving green boughs
in his honor; the Oreads, shy,
the Hill-nymphs, scarce veiling
with misty robes their lithe shapes,

hand-in-hand glided; and next
 the Naiads of bubbling wells,
 frolic brooks, shamelessly glad,
 flaunted as briar-roses fragrant their bare
 bodies light-dartling, dewy-wet
 from the pure and cool element. Thus
 ring within ring
 expanded, until, to right
 and to left of the deity, gleam'd
 (their locks tight-loop'd lest a ray
 of their naked effulgence, a line of their grace
 be obscur'd,) the Charities three;
 and, as holy as they, their virginal
 beauty from eyes profane
 close-drap'd, reflecting the fiat
 creative, their sisters three smil'd —
 the Muses.

III.

Entranc'd
 the order'd, yet waywardly fleet
 interlacings I watch'd
 of the complicate dance: the shimmer,
 the white glow of limbs; the sweep
 float, flutter of drapery; the floor
 of shine aquiver to the numberless
 trip incessant — feet of light
 diffusing quick spiritual rhythm, unheard
 of the ear, as perfume strange
 from tropic flower
 intense, bewildering
 the mind. Then I turn'd
 to scan the noble serene
 countenance kindly of mother
 Demeter. But, sudden her eye
 with bliss unwonted elate,
 (as of strange recognition, immediate,
 incredible,) straightway the beam
 of her gaze I follow'd
 perforce. And lo!

*The transfigura-
 tion is completed
 by the appearance
 of Persephone as
 his queen in the
 midst of all the
 glory.*

at the palpitant life-god's side
 a tranquil apparition of girlish
 loveliness,—blue vein'd temples, and hair
 wheat'n-yellow, with poppies enwreath'd! None other,
 assuredly none than the sweet
 Persephone, so
 with utter trust as a child's
 the God's hand could hold, or as she
 look in his dreadfully glorious face,
 with bride's proud blushful regard.

IV.

*Thereupon Demeter
 embraceth her
 child, and ad-
 dresseth words of
 love to her.*

Demeter's heart brimm'd
 visibly full, and ran over
 with blessedness mute. At length
 her emotion mastering: "Child," she cried,
 "O my child, thou of Spring's swollen buds,
 of silken leaves pale, of velvety fronds
 that ravel, of blossomy shoots,—speak, speak,—
 is it thee, my own, I behold?
 Art thou, in very truth, spouse
 of the great life-giver? Aidoneus
 rap'd thee not? bare thee
 not hellward? in hideous gloom
 secluded thee ne'er? Or, perchance
 hast thou chang'd him, thou
 with thy love, from cruel, obscene
 King of dearth, desolation, despair,
 to a God of exuberant excesses and lustrous
 beatitude?"—Reverently still
 the tumultuous host of the God's
 adherents became, as Daughter
 and Mother, long-parted, embrac'd
 speechless; and Tree-nymphs, Hill-nymphs,
 Water-nymphs, Charities, Muses, all
 fastened with tender
 delight on the Twain their eyes, and not few
 the holy tears that with bliss
 of reunion
 starrily sparkled.

V.

"Daughter dear," at last
 Demeter resum'd, "well knew I indeed
 ere sight I had of thee, Child
 only-belovèd, all, all
 that befell thee. But knowledge,
 (unto mourners expounded of me
 through the ages,) faded, the instant I saw
 thy face, to memories vague
 as of some wild adventure, dream-heard,
 impossible. For verily, Child,
 my child, oft they, who when sorrows
 oppress have belief, if they meet
 face to face the desire of the heart
 are incredulous utterly.
 Now that however I know
 what I knew, and believe,
 well-knowing,—all that ere this I well-knew,
 believing — no phrenzy predictive
 seizeth my soul; but clearly
 methinks, and in absolute calm,
 I foresee such coming of thine
 with thy lord unto me,
 not without blessing for man
 shall have happen'd. My power, of thine
 seconded, Daughter, availleth
 from dark non-existence to call
 Aphrodite once more, the beauty
 of flesh to the light of the world,
 that She
 the broken-hearted console, and help
 the life-loathing;— as once thy mother
 of old She strengthen'd to bear
 bereavment unspeakable,— yea, with a promise
 sure of to-day's encounter. For what
 signified else her smile
 insistent, persuasive, unless
 even this it declar'd: that never

*Demeter now in
 her joy remem-
 bereth that in her
 darkest moment
 Aphrodite
 appeared to her,
 and, out of grati-
 tude, she wisheth
 now to summon
 her into life again.*

from earth, sky, sea, could the beautiful
wholly pass, or perish
from body and spirit of man?"

VI.

*Dionysos accepteth
Demeter instead
of his lost mother,
Semele, and De-
meter loveth him
as a son.*

"So be it even as thou,
Mother, hast said," replied the bloom-goddess
turning in alternate joy
of heart and soul from parent
to lord, from lord
to parent,— a yearning unknown
to herself, beyond speech, in her look.
Yet each, understanding, eyed
strangely the other, one probing
instant; and first, Dionysos in her
his mother beholding, (rever'd
Semele, from infancy mourn'd,) relax'd
his scrutiny, extending a hand
adoptive; and she, Demeter (the wise
from experience of ill, the glad
in goodness perpetual,) knew then in Him
the son divine of her soul.
But aware of the triple felicity, no longer
repressible, the Naiads burst into praise:
Aphrodite, the queen, hailing,— the blessed,
the beauteous, who, unwitting,
gave to the sorrow-bowed strength
of endurance, and hope to the soul-sick
of yore.

THE HYMN TO APHRODITE

1

*The merry Naiads
sing of their own
childish sport;*

Gay spirits we of leaping wells
trickled unabash'd
over moss'd knobs, rough fells;
thro' dingles, bloomy dells
tinkle-tinkle we, splash'd;

in hill-hollows rallied,
we rush'd with loud laughter-screams;
spray-spurting, dilly-dallied
in iridescent, foam-pallid
green pools for day-dreams;
then,
again,
wild, uproarious,
all, together, we leapt
with the waterfalls glorious,
and ocean-ward swept.

2

Wondrous news from sandy shore-lands
we heard of the summer-breeze;
for far never, never far
are
the heights of jutting forelands
from the spume of Hellenic seas.
Dionysos, O imperious,
bid our sisters,—Nymphs of Nereus,—
recount us the marvels as they be;
lest they tease us, worry, weary us
gay Naiads, tho' we emanate from thee!

*but, hearing
strange gossip,
they implore that
their
father command
the sea-nymphs
not to withhold
the truth from
them.*

3

O Hill-nymphs, O Tree-nymphs,
why stayed ye at home?
for we saw all the Sea-nymphs,
joy-drunken, toss the foam.
Aphrodite
that morn,
the mighty,
was born
a girl-babe merrily
cradled of a wave:
and they caught her
(sweet daughter

*They are reward-
ed for their fran-
tic race to the salt
sea, by a vision of
Aphrodite's birth.*

she, of blue sky, blue sea)
yea, and bare her off verily
to a crystalline cave
with frolic and laughter and boisterous glee!

4

They relate circumstances of her rearing and tell of the miracles wrought by her maidenly beauty.

Bubbles, pearls, corals and goldfish red
her pretty childish toys;
hide-and-seek, with the Nymphs, o'er the deep seabed —
a rollicking, innocent noise!
But quickly their foundling, their foster-child
her playmates outgrew and their games:
hers the girlhood mild
sweet, undefiled,
whose beauty the sea-brute tames!
To men and to Gods it is time she be shown
in her loose locks of amber array'd,
that the sea wash her feet with motherly moan
and the blue sky acknowledge the maid.

5

Her journey, on the day of her showing to sky and sea, is described as a triumphal progress to the sacred isle of Cyprus.

In a concave billow
they lay her down,
white arm for soft pillow,
gushing curls for gay gown.
O'er the silk-smooth pellucid boat
stretch a rainbow-woof sail —
to hill-hornèd Cyprus float
bark fair and frail!
Her attendants summon clamorously
light Zephyros to blow.
Lo! he panteth, heart-amorously,
and flying they go!
The Mermaids laugh, sing,
and for gladness upfling
their beauteous arms bubble-shiny;
whom the Mermen escort
with hollo and snort,

eyes on fire, cheeks swollen, beards briny.
 From his ram's horn sends the Triton
 lustily
 skyward a musical jet;
 sea-horses splash, dolphins spout:
 gustily
 mounts the spray, scattering, to light on
 the naked Goddess, her maidens devout,—
 an attire many-beaded of twinkling wet!
 Sly old Proteus her wizard forerunner is
 to quell the waves' turbulent riot;
 behold! heaven's glory upon her is,
 and before her the vast sea's quiet.

Chorus of the Charities

FINALE

Between sister and sister no disparity
 of beauty age or degree;
 we are each a gracious Charity,
 one in love, but in loveliness three.
 Yet we hail thee, Aphrodite, who art fairer
 than we be in worshipping eyes:
 who soothest with hope the despairer —
 thy beauty than wisdom more wise.
 Thy grace never waneth, ever waxeth
 immortal Delight of mankind!
 Thy hold on our hearts who relaxeth?
 for thy smiles are the bonds that bind.
 Thou makest living joys out of griefs that are dead;
 as thou walkest, silver-footed, the day
 lust-monsters writhe under thine airy tread
 whom thy naked lustre doth slay.
 The Gods, yea, men likewise, no longer fear
 the glory of flesh and carnal pride
 if Thou, O peerless, O sane, art near —
 for by Thee are they purified.

*The Charities
 cheerfully ac-
 knowledge her su-
 periority to them-
 selves and highly
 extol her holy
 virtue.*

THE RECONCILIATION

I.

*Dionysos declareth
that indeed it is
now high time
beauty (Aphro-
dite) be once
again associated
with use.*

Holy Mother, sage and good,
heard have thy ears
even now, ravish'd, my lightsome
Naiads, my Charities
spiritual, utter in cadence the praise
melodious of Her
that shall once again charm,
(thou hast said,)
as in days of their youth,
mankind.
For verily, O Mother,
long hath lasted the night
already
of toil, unhallow'd
by joy in the task;
the night — all eyes blinding
but such as glare cat-like
with criminal craft;
too long!

II.

*He comments on
the story of beau-
ty's having
wrought relief
from acute sorrow,
whence, in due
season, Demeter's
wisdom;*

When grieving well nigh
in Thee, immortal, the goddess
had slain, thou wast sav'd
by the life-joyous smile
that in sorrow's despite
a smile responsive compell'd
ajar to set
the doors of thy soul's
prison? And slid
not Hope in tiptoe, and close
at her heels, Desire of life, her lover
constant, who took
each a languid hand of thine,
leading with tender violence

out of thy cell dark, grim,
bare, Thee, to freedom
divine once more?
Yet, as therefore Thou to the Cyprian
Goddess the debt unpaid
rememberest, Mother, so I
to the son, Delos-born, of Leto
owe a friend's undying thank.

III.

Phoibos Apollo!
shimmer quick-shifting
of streams that upwell and outflow;
shine of my gold wash'd pure; light-ray
of my fire volcanic; oracular
counsel uttered at large
from my core unconscious
of things; the vision's preternatural
clearness in them I intoxicate; truth
serene, (first dimly discern'd from height
ecstatic, whither the spirit
I lifted,) in hours of intelligent
quiet remember'd and understood;
O Pythian Phoibos Apollo
who slayest ever anew
with arrow of sanity
the monster of over-faith,
Thee of the peak Parnassian, twin
mount unto mine, Thee, Thee
will I summon from agelong sleep!

*and resolveth on
his part to arouse
disinterested intel-
ligence (Apollo)
from long slum-
ber;*

IV.

For, nowise
Demeter, O Mother
true of Persephone, thy child
I ravish'd, pain to inflict
on one who lov'd her, and whom
not knowing I therefore lov'd; but assur'd
thou couldst never my heart's passion know, nor fate's

*recalling the serv-
ice it (Apollo)
rendered to enthu-
siasm (Dionysos)
by making the lat-
ter gentle and
sane.*

doom irreversible
 whereby thou borest Her, and didst rear
 to maidenhood only that mine
 she should thenceforth be; assur'd
 that willingly not
 to any couldst Thou,
 her mother, yield
 one so desirable; therefore
 forc'd was I, Lord of life,
 in the odious guise of the Ghost-god unreal
 on Her whose favor I crav'd
 violent hands to lay.
 But thereafter my soul's own brother,
 Apollo, the fierceness extreme
 of my deity ancient, sooth'd;
 so that even Persephone, timid
 and gentle, could forgive,
 nay, her ravisher cherish as now!

V.

*Aphrodite and
 Apollo will both
 develop the body,
 each one viewing
 it as the supreme
 means to all good
 ends.*

Behold, thy labors
 (O Mother of Her who is mine
 and thine) shall be match'd
 by labors as gladsome. For Thou
 of the rude and gross, (the pressure
 continuous of pain ennobling,
 refining,) wilt fashion, by little
 and little, the beauty of golden
 Aphrodite again; while I
 from the stony-hard gloom at the stroke
 heroic, death-dealing, at length
 shall elicit the fire and the light
 of the Loxian. To grace
 She shall perfect, for service
 of love, the body; which He to feats
 athletic will hard'n at the hest
 of the manly mind. With charm of the lovely, She
 and with hope, assuageth men's grief;
 while the end afar off perceiving, He,

clearsighted, by knowledge controls
the passion that else, rebellious,
would reason overthrow.

VI.

So, sweeten'd thy memories
of the old bereavement shall be,
that never again couldst thou wish,
Mother Demeter, the past
alter'd in ought, or the fatal
decree overrul'd. The rougher
the rind of life's fruit,
the sweeter the juice thereof
express'd from the seeded pulp! Nay, wouldst Thou
again to reach the broad, warm,
fertile plains of peace, not press
thro' the icy gorge of anguish —
feet bleeding and bruise'd —
once more?

*Dionysos express-
eth the true
philosophy of af-
fliction.*

THE HYMN TO APOLLO

1

Ever, from the womb
of the witless hour,
(of her beauty and power
unaware,)—
the wisest thoughts of man
are born,
most holy and most fair.
Ever, from the tomb
of a right
men
scorn,—
wingeth,
(singeth
in death's despite,)

*The Oreads sing
(by way of prelude
to their hymn of
Apollo) the praises
of Leto (the hid-
den) his mother.*

a spirit again
of godlier might.
Ever, from the gloom
of the cloud-hid night
folding the earth in sadness,—
springeth
at morn
the Lord of the light,
and King of azure gladness.

2

*They remember
the fall of Zeus's
clandestine wooing
of Leto;*

By the banks of the stream
of sleep,
and the lake of dream
still, deep,
the dark Night stray'd
a starry, chaste
maid,
and dipped her feet in the water
to wade;
when the white
sky's Light
his splendor effac'd,
to glide
undescried
as a lustrous, proud swan to her bashful side.
But, alas! of his ruffled plumes unafraid,
alas! for the woe he wrought her,
poor maid.

3

*and recount how
she fared at the
hands of wicked
mankind who had
not heard thereof.*

The home she forsook of her girlhood, in shame,
and sought out a lone spot to die;
yet soon for her child's sake, unborn, she came
to abodes of mankind far and nigh,
in Zeus's name, the hospitable, food
humbly imploring, and shelter.
But, boorish, men void of pity
thought scorn of her plea; women, rude,

insolent when they felt her
 sore plight, jeer'd, foully-witty:
 "What? Zeus? God Zeus was thy lover!
 'twere impious to doubt of his truth;
 so we dare not provide
 for thy want," they cried,
 "be assur'd his sky-roof guest-friendly will cover —
 and the bread of his board feed — the bride of his youth!"
 That, cruel, the shaft
 her sick heart might pierce
 when Leto totter'd and pal'd,
 they gloated and laugh'd,
 and in mockery fierce
 her as maiden-mother they hail'd.
 Little knew they that ever God claimeth
 the child by man unclaim'd! —
 Woe, woe! who a mother shameth,
 forsaken — for he shall be sham'd!

4

Horror smitten, of their lowland and highland
 men saw a rich vale, a steep hill
 by Zeus, thundering, riven:—an island
 afloat at the waves' wild will!
 And swift with the current it carried
 the outcast far from their sight,
 while the coarse women, maids yea, and married,
 lay prone on the earth with affright.
 Lo! in seabound Delos, the manifest isle, bereft
 of all human comfort and aid,
 writhes Leto, the hid, in a rocky cleft,
 of the awful end afraid.
 With child of a God, sore be her throes;
 loud-shrieking, is her frail flesh torn,—
 then, utter hush ensues and repose.
 Is it death? Nay, Apollo is born!

*Zeus cometh to her
 aid, miraculously
 fashioning out of
 a promontory the
 floating isle of
 Delos, where her
 travail overtaketh
 her.*

*Leto is bidden note
the power and the
love of Zeus, in
that he hath trans-
ferred to Delos the
very stream and
lake on whose
banks he won her;
and the portents
in honor of her
son's birth are re-
hearsed.*

Mother Leto, awake!
What? Mopos the stream
of life's sleep,
and the azure lake
of love's dream
still deep,
aflash with the sun's clear rise,
do thine eyes
not recognize?
Dost thou not feel the earth
immense
under thee heave and shake
with a mad, convulsive mirth?
Hark! the depth of grey Ocean vents
in waves of applause that break
on shore-sands shiny, his joy at the wonderful birth.
The winds waft fragrance ambrosial from sky-banks aflower;
victorious palms, laurels lustrously ever-green
leap from the crag, and the hillside bare, to embower
Thee, mother of daylight, Thee, Leto, unseen!
Flocks of swan-cloudlets from Asia come swimming
thro' air and encircle from East unto West
seven times, the risen Apollo hymning,
the sacred isle that offer'd thee rest.
Palm-pillars of gold, laurel-capital'd, vast,
up-shoot from truth's unplumbed ground under-sea,
the rocking cradle of myth to make fast
forever, in honor of him and of thee;
and the Cyclades all, at the blaze of his power
shall encompass it, footing a miraculous reel,
transform'd to cloud-islands, at the magical hour
when the burst of his innermost glory they feel.
In welcoming cheer, in musical hollo,
let Naiads, let Oreads, let Dryads unite:
All-hail, O Apollo! O Apollo! O Apollo!
God, newborn, of the risen sun's light.

Litany of the Muses

FINALE

Of music, of dance and of song
 we
 Three
 be
 mystical Muses
To our Lord and sire we belong
 and the Soul that for His he chooses.
But O best-belovèd, brother
 of Melpomenos, noble Apollo,
we pray that he bid us none other
 but Thee of all deities follow.
For thou art oracular shower—
 true fore-knower;
of things as they be, calm seer,—
 fear-freer;
of the heart's revengeful ire
 purifier;
when Thou bendest thy golden bow—
 woe! woe!—
the white bone it will pierce with its arrow
 to the marrow!
For, O Pythian hater of disguise,
 craven lies;
who lovest the frank and the fair
 that will dare
look Thee, pure God, in the eye—
 yea, die
but not merit his own soul's scorn;—
 Thou hast sworn:—
who cowardly hatreds cherish
 shall perish;
to back-biters and knaves Thou wilt send
 sore end;
but the old,—kind death shall obtain
 without pain
of Thee, who men's piteous ills canst feel,
and with death, or new life thy suppliant heal!

*The three Muses
petition Apollo and
their sire,
surnamed Melpom-
enos, that they be
never required to
follow other deities
than them twain.*

So, we Muses of dance, of music, of song,
to Thee, noble Phoibos Apollo,
and Melpomenos, only, our father, belong
and no stranger Gods ever will follow!

RIVALS DIVINE

I.

The company divideth, one side preferring Aphrodite to the left of Persephone, and the other side, to the right of Dionysos, particular votaries of Apollo.

As their praise of the Loxian
the Muses three, ended
in joy of faith, not without awe
or wondering love,—the host
of worshippers, subdued
by the singing, divided in twain
ranging about the emanative
splendors, (seen first in ardors intense
of devotion,) a crescent to right of the God
Melpomenos:—his Muses white-clad,
his Hill-nymphs diaphanous-shrouded,
his green-garmented Dryads of trees,
and the terrible Pans, the jeering
Satyrs, awaiting his nod
to renew their clamor. Likewise
a crescent to left of the fair
Persephone:—the Charities three
in snows of nudity
chaste, the Naiads light-footed
with eyes asparkle, the Maenads scarce
held from resuming the dance
orgyastic, (thyrsus in air
and locks loose-tumbled, dappled faun-hides
ill-cloaking shoulders wine-stain'd
and voluptuous rosy-tipp'd breasts,)
by the stilling look of the bride
of their God. From the instant's hush
unendurable, loud for sheer bliss
cried a Naiad: "Hail Aphrodite!"
and answering an Oread

shrill'd out: "Apollo!" Then each,
interrupting the other's flow
of rapturous song, alternate
pursued the praise of her chosen
deity, with reasoning melodious
as rival birds
of the new-leav'd bush:—

II.

Love ye the Goddess of gracious full being?

*A Naiad and an
Oread sing by
turns, and, effectually
merging their
rival hymns, illustrate
the fitness of
the deities for a
spiritual union.*

Know ye the God of delighted clear seeing?

She, of the tyrannous affinity
fast knitting wholes of the several parts?

He, stern sundering divinity
who searcheth things to their secret hearts?

Behold, it is She refineth
to surfaces smooth all substance material
for the ray of the sun to illumine and warm—

Behold, it is He who shineth
and maketh alive and light and ethereal
things coarse, dead, heavy, with spiritual form—

Yea, of Her is the splendor caught
to the gladsome eye refracted;
beauteous form made real
for the human hand's persistent
soft, insatiate caress!

By Him, from chaos and nought
things order'd, shap'd, compacted,
mirror the soul's ideal,
and are nigh'r to man when distant—
subtiliz'd to loveliness!

Her function to set the senses ashiver,
(when heart is sick,
and spirit is blind,)
an immediate assurance procuring
of the wealth and the worth of the world—

His office the heart from sense to deliver;
He rouseth the quick,
inquisitive mind
with a mystery ever alluring
in the inmost folds of it furl'd!

Who but She can save the mind
from idle self-beholding?
for Hers is the beauty of ebb and of flow
in the manifold tides
external:

Whose the praise if men divin'd
the world's gradual unfolding?
in changes and chances, the shine and the show,
what is sure and abides
eternal?

Aphrodite, thine alone the flower of living and breathing flesh!

O Apollo, sun-extracted, thine its perfume dewily fresh!

Through Thee feeling and loving—and art to bid death
defiance!

Through Thee seeing and knowing, and man's life-mas-
tering science.

VOTIVE GIFTS

I.

Then gratulant outspake, benign,
the Mother: "Not twain
are our labors, nor match'd shall they be
merely, as thou hast foretold,
but mated, rather; for which
without either hath life? Well, meseems,
and wisely thy maidens have sung
their mutual need. Yet, in days
of virtue Hellenic, long-past (the former
youth of the Gods) discontent
drove them abroad over earth; for not
in Olympos found they the sweets sufficient
of fellowship utter as yours,
my children! Though whence
this foreboding gladsome, beyond
pious doubt, I know not; but hark!
at the break of the day of their earliest
meeting, the Maid, scarce aware
of her deity's dawn, with the Youth
(Him of sight, Him of mind, in Her
fully shown to himself—
Her of touch, Her of heart)
shall in wedlock be joined. And who
if not ye, their love with pledge
of progression shall cheer, with votive
gifts from lovers expert to lovers
still in the best of their joy
uninitiate,—that day of supreme expectancy,
prime of united lives?"

*Demeter foretelleth
the marriage of
beauty and truth,
art and science
(Aphrodite and
Apollo).*

II.

"What boon,"
Persephone, blushing,
replied, "shall we dole unto Gods,
lovers? The Charities three

*Persephone prom-
iseth wedding
gifts—and Diony-
sos is seized with
the prophetic fury;*

of beautiful giving, and taking, and using,
 gladly I grant to the Bride, shall she visit
 Eleusis, the eve of her happy
 espousals; and surely, Dionysos
 Melpomenos, Lord
 of rhythm and phrenzy poetic, will
 on the Bridegroom, his dearly lov'd brother, bestow
 the mystic Muses of dance, music, song."
 The God's smile her words affirming,—behold
 the gaze abstract of his eyes
 took aureate lustre from worlds mist-molten,
 remote, (whose life with passionate dream
 prenatal, throbbeth in fire-seed;) and straightway
 his lips parting,—one shudder
 thrill'd, beatific, the worshipping host
 entire, (by fury predictive attain'd,) that each
 in his own soul only the words
 of the nuptial prophecy caught.

III.

*whereupon he ut-
 tereth a marriage
 blessing upon the
 twain, proclaiming
 their joys of love
 and triumphs of
 their progeny.*

Aphrodite,
 Eucharis, full of grace, full
 of charm, with thy Charities three, from whose hands
 are fair living, and loving;
 Apollo,
 Musagetes, leader frank
 of 'the sisters three, who translate
 man from earth-struggle to care-free
 altitudes human; the time
 of your blessèd return impatient
 the world expecteth for aeons of righteous
 peace without end. And lo!
 it prepareth for you the privacy
 bridal, the couch creative of infinite
 rapture divine; that fatefully,
 fearfully drawn must ye be to bowers
 where droop hot roses
 their crimson heads close,
 face by face; and about them hills

rise, as in icy array defensive, whose tall
 lilies in winds of unconscious desire,
 ring out their laughter-peals
 fragrant. And thither, O thither
 the mystical will of the life
 self-perpetuate shall tyrannous urge ye,
 sweet love-maddened lovers; there, mouth
 to mouth, ye shall know not self
 from the lov'd one apart; and the lilies
 moon-silvery erst, are sun-fulvid
 with pollen-stain rich; and the roses,
 burst open, storm crimson petals,—
 aw whirl as they fall, in sign
 that the flesh, with voluptuous reluctance at last,
 panting; admitteth the mind's
 penetrant stern resolve.
 Such shall the anguished
 gendering of Gods be, for jocund
 birth instantaneous. Rejoice, rejoice,
 O ye who the ancient Olympos
 rul'd, that, more absolute these—more adorably
 fair than of yore yourselves,—shall effortless fell
 the Titans, your foes rearisen; and aloft
 the summit sublime of the sacred
 mount, rear homes eternal, whence
 their sway shall extend all-potent forever
 o'er a nobler, a larger mankind!

HYMNS HYMENEAL

I. *General Chorus*

All praise Dionysos,
 Demeter, Persephone, to your united divinity!
 Your glories suffice us—
 blossom, fruit, life-seed,—great Eleusynian trinity.
 We laud you forever
 that hospitable ye are in your gracious affinity;
 devising new pieties
 that tighten,

*The gods of
 Eleusis are praised
 for the sincere wel-
 come they extend
 to more recent
 claimants of wor-
 ship by Maenads,
 Satyrs, Pans,
 Nymphs, Charities,
 Muses.*

not sever,
th' old bonds of devotion;
(the streams of our worship not lost in the ocean
the dead-sea of a jealousy bitter and dumb,
our longings not drown'd in a lonely infinity,)
we exalt you for hailing unbegotten societies
of Gods that shall brighten
the ages to come.

II. *The Muses*

*The Muses set
forth the necessity
of polytheism.*

For the Gods are many and various:
the good things that men love and desire.
The life of the world were precarious
if it burn'd not with manifold fire.
Men's ideals,— flame-gods, aspirations,
rare excellences, heroisms sublime,—
be innumerable as races and nations,
as moods of man, moments of time.
But the heights know each other, saluting
athwart the vast plains of low land:
(the worship of each not confuting
the worship of all,) hand in hand
the glorious mountains enring us
old earth of the animal strife;
and together, one in spirit, they sing us
the pæan of man's divine life.

III. *The Charities*

HYMN TO EROS

*The Charities burst
into a hymn unto
the ancient Eros,
God of love, ever
young, ever wise,
ever glorious, God
of gods.*

Yet who
shall renew
man's universe?
restore to it
a splendor pristine?
in the bath of cleansing fire immerse?
give more and ever more to it
of the passionate heat suns kissed in

ere cool'd by the impious curse?
of the pride in spiritual might
ere fell on man's bloom a blight,
and the better was deem'd the worse?
O Eros, sole god-head primeval,
invisible witness thou wast
of the continents' upheaval,
from the warm love-languorous sea;
and again, the whelming urgency
of waters that boil'd and toss'd
o'er the slow voluptuous submergence
of the lands—from whom but from Thee?
Thou—atom to atom alliest,
commingling the alien and strange,
dissevering the likest and nighest,
allowing no ultimate rest;
and marshall'd from chaos dismal,
undergoing mystical change,
the molecules stellar and prismatic
crystals compose at thy hest.
Thou givest flow'rs color and fragrance,
and honey, that, pollen-shower'd,
unawares the air's sunny vagrants
to perform thy sweet tasks be empower'd.
Thou givest, many-hued
iridescent
plumes to the birds; yea, throats
to trill, warble, pipe, whistle, incessant
subdued
or triumphant rich notes.
Of Thee, in thy season, all creatures
have special terror and grace;
softening man's fiercer features,
flushing maid's meekest face.
Of Thee, all friendships, heart-duties,
devotions to social good,
all ardent faiths, luminous beauties,
pure manhood, strong womanhood.
Far to near, and upper to nether,
lest they cease from being divine,

th' very Gods thou knittest together,
 and their glory and honor is thine.
 O Eros, the new ages shall feel Thee
 binding earth and heaven so close
 that lowliest souls shall reveal Thee
 th' High God in the common and gross!

IV. *The Nymphs*

*The Nymphs laud
 the divine issue of
 wedded Apollo and
 Aphrodite, predict-
 ing the condescen-
 sion of the god-
 desses to human
 lovers.*

The God of daylight, the Goddess of form aglow
 O ancient Eros, 'tis Thou shalt affiancé:
 and glorious the race of new Gods that shall owe
 their being to wedded Art and Science.
 They shall dwell not idle in sky-courts remote
 high-wall'd on perpetual blue above cloud;
 nor shall incense that men to their honor devote
 make them careless, cruel, ignobly proud;
 no heav'ns shall they promise their worshippers
 which never the living can hope to enter;
 nor teach scorn of Earth, and all that is hers,
 on themselves men's devotions to center.
 They shall live on the heights, but heights terrestrial
 of difficult—yet possible—ascént;
 master, not slay, in man what is bestial,
 to subserve the divine intent.
 Nor icily chaste, without radiant issue,
 shall the Goddesses, wondrously beautiful,
 in crystal houses 'neath spreads of gold-tissue,
 dream, languorous, on couches of cloudy wool.
 For the haughtiest hath—an Endymion, an Adonis,
 and wotteth some trysting-spot hallowed and dear,
 where she with him and her love alone is
 in wood or glade, by fountain or mere.
 Because, never ideals can wed one another
 though chosen manly spirits they may
 blessedly love; but twice blessed the mother
 of a hero who extendeth o'er earth her sway;
 and thrice blessed the hero, the half-divine
 who in his—reflecteth his mother's face,
 whose gentleness, purity, sweetness refine
 and ennoble, in living and dying, his race!

V.

O the Gods of masculine might,
the splendors eternally fated,
in vain with man would fight;
not so could they wrest of him
the truest, the best of him:
for their cruel perfection hated.

But, as Semele granted her beauty entire
to Zeus the wielder of heavenly fire;
as Danae yielded (when a storm-shower of gold
fell through green boughs of hope) in the passionate fold
of his arms, to his fierce desire;
as once Ariadne, the woe-begone,
tearful awoke in the blushful dawn
to wed the wine-rapturous God of the bold;
as Clymene fair of hair
bowed dim in a flare of air
radiant and hot from her sunbright Apollo;
so the maidens of earth shall in ages to come
be wooed of the gods in terrestrial disguise;
and whithersoever they flee, will follow
Love with lustrous, worshipful eyes.
Of ideals joy-begotten and born of earth-agony,
womanhood grander shall visit mankind,
courageous, strong, swift of foot, unable to flag on a
skyward ascent of spirit and mind;
beautiful, pure of soul, feminine evermore—
sisterly, motherly, wifely sweet:—
might of brain, grace of heart, time shall not sever more
married in womanhood final, complete.

*The Maenads
shout jubilantly
and extol the wis-
dom and justice
shown in the mat-
ing of their godly
sons to maids of
earth.*

INTERLUDE

Satyrs— O Pans, fierce Pans, they have prophesied
the death of your savage day!
Pans— O Satyrs, Satyrs, they lied, they lied—
t'is ye who must first give way!
Satyrs— Nay, Apollo will slay the human beast,
and man no more on man shall feast!

*Satyrs, Pans, and
Maenads are
doomed not to
perish, but to en-
dure a beneficent
transformation.*

Pans— Aphrodite will conquer with a smile
your drunken lusts, and your laughter vile.
Maenads—O Satyr, O Pan, why quarrel for naught?
Not perish shall Ye, but a change endure:—
Satyr to laughter joyously pure,
Pan to a terrible courage of thought.
So shall ye serve man loyally both;
while, soothing the wilder in us and the rougher,
we Bacchic maidens as surely must suffer
the ache, and the bliss of a spiritual growth.
But in all that man thinketh, and feeleth, and
willeth,
and in all that he doeth, shall he own our control;
an enthusiasm, oblivious of self, that fulfilleth,
with a holy confidence, body and soul.

THE BANQUET OF THE GODS

I.

1. *The Naiads*

*The water-nymphs
see Aphrodite en-
throned with Apol-
lo in New Olym-
pos.*

Aphrodite Eucharis—
'tis She,
in robe of dazzling dew
(see, see!)
throning aloft
pure, gentle, soft!
The locks—of Apollo beside her—diffuse
halo of sunny bliss,
glory of many hues!

2. *The Dryads*

*Tree-nymphs de-
scribe the forest-
shaded road that
leadeth up the holy
mount.*

Tell us! what shining street
winds up Olympos sheer?
not surely for happy human feet?
Can men and matrons, youths and maids
breathe air so pure?

a lustre endure
that fails not, nor fades?
feel of the Gods no stifling fear?

3. *The Oreads*

O happier, devouter race!
yours no penance, pleadings
humiliant,
hero-sorrows vicarious,
and sore
intercedings;
but footstep resilient
and life-glad face,
as ye come with jubilant cry
in labyrinthine-various
processional dance,
each, boldly to occupy
a rightful place
in the festal hall:—

*Hill-nymphs tell of
human processions
ascending with
ease and jubila-
tion.*

4. *Chorus of Nymphs*

Ice-shiny floor,
cloud marble wall
and roofing expanse
of sky
over all!

*Together the
Nymphs shout for
joy at the splendor
and vastness of the
divine house.*

II.

1. *The Charities*

Then at the board shall guest with host,
Man with God sit down;
flowers spring forth that each loves most,
each crown'd with an odorous crown;
of pearl opalescent the massy dishes
are pil'd with all fruits that grow;
greetings of love, and pious wishes
set every face aglow!

*Whereupon the
Charities praise the
banquet at which
Demeter dealeth
out her broken
bread of sorrow,
feeding the soul to
holy strength;*

Then, lo!
 Thou, Demeter,
 shalt solemnly, slowly,
 for Gods alike and for Men,
 break bread
 most holy—
 (than all meat sweeter—
 the loaf of grief and bereavement
 ground, kneaded, parch'd with fire,)
 that strengtheneth to great achievement,
 and maketh the fed
 aspire!

2. *The Muses*

*and the Muses add
 thereto, that Dionysos
 poureth forth
 for all the blood
 wine of heroic
 self-immolation
 that inspireth and
 rendereth divine.*

Dionysos, then, to their broken bread,
 Thou wilt pour
 more and more
 in crystalline bowls
 iridescent,
 the juices fire-red
 of grape-clusters bruised,
 sweet-scented
 with virtuous herbs aromatic:—
 the hero-blood that from death-wounds ooz'd
 as the slayers too late repented.
 O Wine by worship of grateful souls
 fermented;
 O Wine effervescent
 with the final bliss of self-sacrifice
 ecstatic;
 O intoxicant Wine
 without price
 from life's death-vat divine,—
 beget in each drinker,
 the lover's rapture Elysian,
 the poet's fury, the prophet's vision,
 the serene world-sight of the thinker!

3. General chorus

Praise, praise everlasting
to Thee, O Demeter
to Thee, Dionysos, Thee daughter and bride
Persephone,—holy Gods of Eleusis:—
Thou who feedest the fasting
to nourish the spiritual life of the eater,
thy food sanctifying for worthiest uses;
Thou who quenchest the thirst
for the best in the worst,
till at length their desires be satisfied;
Thou who bindest with love the Twain
in One;—

As on earth so in heaven ye see it is:
all thanks be due,
and all honor is done
to them who chose pain,
not pleasure;
great-hearted service, not griping sway;
who their might superhuman to measure
build up, give life,—not demolish and slay!
Wherefore, O noble Eleusynian deities
we vow perpetual worship to you:
wherefore thro' the ages for ever and aye,
though new names ye receive
again and again,
no Gods more than You will we serve and believe,
sung of children, lov'd of women, hallow'd of men!

*The Maenads,
Satyrs, Pans,
Nymphs, Charities,
Muses, all together, exult in the
greatness of the
Eleusynian three,
assuring them per-
petuity of worship
and the tender re-
gard of men to the
last age of the
world.*

THE AFTERSONG

I.

*The final chorus
hath caused the
poet to fall into
an ecstasy;*

*From the confluent torrents of praise
delirious waxed the dithyramb's
worshipful fury:
a vortex of rapture
symphonious, fast-swirling,
spray-bursts of clamor irrepressible,
gurgling eddies in eddies
of laughter, along on its surface
of melody; breaking
its uttermost edge to ecstatic surf
'gainst hill-shores reverberant,
its own violence engulfing
in the abysmal deep of itself.*

II.

*so that he hath a
vision of the city,
erst foul and
dark, made pure
and full of light;*

*Rapt to vertiginous pitch
above seeing and hearing, my soul
soar'd immobile in hush and void;
till again life-aware, no vision
deific disturb'd her incurious content. Below
stood fleckless my city, ethereal, clear;
relucant with quivering wet
from the holy wash of the rain;
gables, chimneys, towers, pinnacles, spires,
to crystal transmuted, clove eager
the vitreous, light-vibrant air;
sparkl'd, gleam'd, flicker'd, flar'd, flash'd
in the downpour of sunshine, whence swollen
the fulgurant gold river flowed large
to vanish behind proud heights
whereon lean'd the verge of the sky.*

III.

Then, a swift assurance of my mind
 took unreasoning possession. Before me
 was the foretold wonder in symbol fulfill'd:
 coarse stuff of earth, deem'd hitherto foul,
 now illustrious with spiritual ardor; quick beams
 into wastes of dark nothing hurl'd
 uselessly forth, fix'd now
 in substantial splendor for man.
 And, as Demeter, ancient mother
 of sorrow, as Dionysos with blood-spotted
 garment, the bridegroom, undaunted
 of death, (in mystical fellowship held
 at Eleusis by love for the daughter, the bride
 Persephone,) hail'd Apollo,
 Aphrodite hail'd, (in the myth
 of my dreaming,) their beneficent
 sway to divide o'er the fortunes of man:
 So, Life
 with studied iniquity
 dealing her doom of anguish
 selective, that the many thereby
 become few or barren, while the few
 mother many in their forfeited
 room at ease;
 So, Life
 inspiring his chosen
 the impossible to dare, with folly
 of will, that the few thus perish, and live
 in the marvel of the many a multiplied
 life of lives;
 So, the world's
 dire powers propulsive
 (at one in their passion alone
 for unfolding might and grace).
 Evolution!—
 Revolution!—

and straightway he
 comprehendeth the
 meaning of the en-
 tire vision.

invite
 to a share in their secular
 toil, makers of man than they
 less cruel; for, with vital doctrine Science,
 enamor'd, impregnateth Art, who in joy
 bringeth deathless ideals to the day,
 nobler, more vigorous, lords of a higher
 heaven, earth-transfigurers, begetters brave,
 yea, and beautiful bearers of men
 in their likeness,
 after their kind.

IV.

But his wonder
 waxeth greater
 when the city
 changeth to a vast
 theatre,

Comforted gazed I, though tears
 of gratitude dimm'd my sight.
 For the city on a sudden became
 a sun-dazzling arena
 immense; and her girdle
 of hills with their shelving
 streets (huge benches, tier over tier
 for intent spectators,) swept
 amphitheatre-wise about; and the river
 a choric procession, white-vested,
 an altar large
 encirc'd solemn and slow
 with song; but beyond
 and above them, larger, arose
 the altar heroic for human
 oblation of bravery, rectitude, slain
 of their slayers but to triumph
 in Them,
 o'er the wisdom of scarring
 experience, at last,
 as faiths inborn, and instinctive smiles!

V.

and forthwith ex-
 pandeth to his
 country—as the
 stage for the final

Bewilder'd, I star'd (though passionate
 tears continued to blind me,) far
 athwart sky-reaches

diaphanous, without
 end; the elusive
 horizon receding apace, till man's
 arena of achievement
 outspread to the length, in my view,
 and the breadth of the land
 best-beloved, by a monstrous half-ring
 environ'd, of eternal
 main-lands sea-welded
 together (the shine of vast strands
 with shine of wide waters blent.)—Europe
 and Africa east, and to southward
 America; Australia
 with Asia in the west;—
 the terrestrial amphitheatre's
 round, where the nations throng
 agape, young and old,
 at the spectacle new, the last act
 of hell,—heaven's first:
 the deification of Man!

display to the
 world of the God
 in man.

VI.

Then close my eyes shut, by the portent
 dismayed, lest the former despair
 had bestowed no miraculous gift
 of far sight prophetic, but mock'd me instead
 with hallucinations: "Too good,
 too beautiful," cried I aloud,
 "for wildest belief!" But gently
 my panic allayed to a calm
 certitude strange of great joy.
 Soft at my Soul's ear Hope
 whisper'd: "Too good, too beautiful
 not to be true,—yea, and soon
 true for Thee, true for Me
 somehow, somewhere, sometime!"
 Though the storm of seership
 still'd, I linger'd serene
 on the sheer height awhile of Culture

The poet, bewildered and amazed,
 dareth not disbelieve the truth of
 the vision; wherefore he declareth
 it to his fellow-men, that they may
 decide whether it
 shall be proven
 true or false;—for
 in present deeds
 make they the fate
 beautiful or hideous
 of all time to
 be.

*Hellenic, at peace with my bliss
and smiled; for I caught myself unawares
murmuring (some burden of a hymn
in sweet dreams heard,)*

*"Surely it should be, wherefore
it shall be, it must be, it is—
as I saw it and see it again,
and in vision have shown it to thee!"*

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

LEOPARDI AND GOETHE

LA GINESTRA

On the arid shoulder here
of the formidable mount
Vesuvius, fierce destroyer,
which else of neither tree is cheered, nor flower,
Thou scatterest thy solitary shrubs,
sweet-smelling Broom,
content with wildernesses. Thee I saw
with thy sprays gracing also the waste lands
which girdle the city round
that once of man was queen,
and with their staid appearance taciturn
to the passerby seemed to bear witness
and make memorial of her empire lost.
Now once again, lover of sorrowful sites
forsaken, of broken fortunes, comrade true,
I view Thee on this soil. These fields
with ashes unproductive strewn,
mantled with indurate lava,
under the wanderer's footsteps resonant,
where finds the snake his nest
and writhes in the sun, and where returns
the rabbit to his wonted hollow lair,—
blithe rural homes once were, ploughed ground
golden with wheat ears, loud
with lowing of herds;
gardens and palaces
for the great a refuge pleasurable
of idle ease; there cities far-famed
once stood which the fierce mount

with fiery torrents from his fulminant mouth
along with their indwellerswhelmed.
One common desolation all enfolds
where thou, O gracious Flower, dost stand,
and sendest, as though of others' ruin piteous,
to heaven incense of most sweet fragranc
the waste wild comforting. These scenes let him
visit whose use 'tis to extol
our lot with praise; let him take note
for our race how solicitous
fond Nature is; and the vast might here
with equitable measure can he mete
of that humanity, which, with slight stir
when danger least is feared,
a heartless foster-mother in part extirpates,
and with some motion little less light
is able utterly to annihilate.
In these realms stand depicted
of our human generations
the magnificent progressive destinies!

Look hither! here glass thyself,
arrogant, fatuous Age,
that didst the path forsake — till then
by thought reanimate beckoned on—
and tracing back thy steps
dost boast of thy retreat
proclaiming it advance!
To thy child's play all gifted souls
whose hostile fate made Thee
their parent, tribute of worship pay,
tho' at times, among themselves
they make of thee their jest.
Not I shall go down to my grave thus shamed!
A light task 'twere for me
after the rest to pattern, and,
raving in manner set,
make to thine ear my song acceptable.
But I choose rather that the full disdain
which in my heart is pent

have utterance as open as may be.
Albeit most well I know
whoever to his own age proves
o'ermuch distasteful, soon is quenched
by dull oblivion! Of which curse
that I must share with Thee,
till now have I made merry.
Thou dreamest of freedom still
and wouldst at the self-same time
have Thought be slave again;—
to which alone 'tis due if we have risen
partly from savagery, with whose sole aid
our culture waxes, which conducts alone
our public fortunes forth
to better things. Thus did the truth
displease thee, which the bitter lot
taught, and the station low
assigned to us by Nature; for this cause
basely didst turn thy back
on the light that made it clear;
and thou—a runagate—
callest him base, who doth pursue
the light;—and only him great-souled
who, flouting himself, or others,—fool or knave,—
above the stars our mortal rank exalts!

A man that's destitute, with limbs
infirm,—but lofty soul well-born,—
nor vaunts, nor fancies himself
in gold rich, or robust;
to opulent living 'mong the throng
and valorous person, makes
no farcical pretense;
but lets, without false shame appear
his lack of strength and wealth; in open speech
of them makes mention, and of his state
with truth accordant shapes his estimate.
A foolish creature,—not magnanimous,—
do I deem him, who, born
to perish and in suffering reared,

should say "for pleasure was I framed,"
and with offensive arrogance
fill volumes; loftiest destinies
and novel felicities—
whereof not our planet alone
but the whole heavens know nought,—
pledging to a Race whom a wave
of storm-stirred sea, a breath
of air malignant, a subterranean shock,
so utterly destroys
that with great difficulty
their memory persists.

A noble nature hath
who dares to lift against
the common doom his mortal eye,
and with frank phrases,—nought from the truth
deducting—the ills that make our fate
acknowledges, and our low station frail;
Who shows himself great, valiant
in suffering; nor augments
with fratricidal hates and wraths
(than other ills more grievous) his distress;
Nor holds man answerable
for what he suffers, but assigns
to her the blame; who is indeed
guilty:—as to birth Mother, but
in heart, Step-mother of mankind!
Her he calls Foe; and, thinking
(as is most true) human society
originally in martial order drawn
Her to oppose,—confederate he esteems
all men, encircling them with love sincere;
offering, and looking for returns
of potent and prompt aid
in alternate perils, in the pains
of common warfare. His right hand
to arm against offending fellow-man,
to fetter his neighbor, or in his path
set hindrances, folly he deems:
as 'twould be in a camp

besieged by hostile armies, when the assault
is at the hottest, forgetful of the foe,
to start a bitter feud among one's friends;
to let the sword flash bare,
flight-spreading, among one's brothers in arms!
Thoughts such as these
when they have grown (as once they were)
familiar to the masses; when the fear,
that first in social ties knit men,
by veritable science is in part
brought back; then honorable
and noble citizen-intercourse,
equity and sweet mercy, another root
will have obtained than fables insolent,
founded whereon the popular probity
is wont to stand erect as safe
as can aught that hath propped itself up on a lie.

Ofttimes o'er these ravaged tracts
which the congealed flood cloaks somberly
swelling as tho' in billows it would roll,
I sit me down at night
and watch the stars, out of the blue
of purity absolute on high,
dart on the melancholy heath their fires,
(which afar off the smooth sea mirroreth);
and all about, o'er the whole heaven,
the Universe with sparkles scintillate.
And when my eyes I raise
to fix those lights that to their view
show as mere dots, yet are so vast
that measured by them earth and sea
are but a dot indeed; to which
not merely man, but this world-globe
whereon Man is as naught,
Is utterly unknown; and when
I gaze upon those knots of clustering stars
beyond all measure more remote,
that unto us as mists appear, by which
not Man, nor the mere earth, but all —

(for number infinite and for mass —
our golden sun included) all the stars
we see are unsuspected, or appear
to them, as they to earth: a point
of nebulous brilliancy; — what then
seemest thou to my mind,
O Child of man? Remembering, in turn,
thy state below, well set forth by the soil
I tread; how nevertheless
Thou dost believe thyself
Lord, and appointed End for all that is!
How often Thou wast pleased to feign
upon this obscure grain of sand minute
called Earth, because of thee
the Framers of the Universe descended
frequent converse pleasurable to hold
with some of thine; — and how, renewing
such fatuous dreams, insulted are the wise
even by this present Age
which seems for knowledge to outtop
and civil manners all times hitherto —
what feeling then, unhappy mortal race,
what thought of Thee at last my heart assails?
I know not if contempt, or pity 'tis, prevails?

As from a tree drops a dwarf apple down
which toward the Autumn's close
no other power but its own ripeness flings
to earth; and, in its fall, the precious homes
of some ant-people, tunneled in soft turf
at cost of infinite toil, it crushes, unpeoples;
and the labors, and the ample store
assiduously collected by that folk,
with provident strain, prolonged
throughout the summer season, in one instant
buries; — so from the thunderous womb
hurled to the heavens profound
a night and ruin — compact
of ashes, cinders, rocks, with seething streams
dilute — that fell as a leaden hail; —

Or, a vast flood of boulders, liquefied
metals, and molten sand
hissing adown the mountain's grassy flanks,—
wasted, destroyed, and whelmed
in a few seconds, the cities which the sea
bathed on her farther shore;
and here now over them goats browse,
while cities new rise on the other side,
for which the buried make
foundations firm; and the steep mount
spurns with its trampling foot the prostrate walls.
Nature nor venerates, nor hath in care
Man more than ant; and, if more rare
be the slaughter of man than ant
unto no other cause 'tis due
but that less numerous is man's progeny!

Full eighteen centuries have sped
since, by fire's violence oppressed,
vanished those populous seats; but still
the humble peasant who his vineyard tends,
who in these fields with difficulty
by the dead and cindered soil is fed,—
lifts a suspicious eye
up to the fatal peak, which no whit tamed,
yet sits terrific, threatens yet
ruin to him, his sons
and their scant patrimony. Oftentimes
the wretch upon the roof
of his rustic cot, the whole night long will lie
sleepless in the wandering airs;
and leap up more than once
the course of the dread seething mass to explore
that pours adown the sandy back
forth from the exhaustless hollow gorge,
with whose reflected glow
gleams the sea beach of Capri, Naples' port,
and Mergellina. Should he see it
draw nigh, or in the depths
of his own well hear the water gurgle hot—

his sons he rouses, in all haste his wife,
and fleeing with whatever they can snatch
of their poor property, they watch from afar
their wonted dwelling, and the little field,
(their sole defense from famine,) fall a prey
to the prowling flood inexorable,
that crackles as it reaches them, and spreads
stiffening forever over all.
To the rays of heaven is restored
after agelong oblivion, dead Pompeii,
like an interrèd skeleton
by piety or greed exhumed;
and, from the desolate forum,
standing among the files
of columns truncated, the traveler
a long while contemplates
that Mount with its twin peaks,
the smoking crest that still
threatens the scattered ruins.
And, in the horror of night's secrecy,
over the vacant amphitheatres
and toppled temples and the houses wrecked,
where hides the bat her young,—
like to a dismal torch
that circles ominously
through empty palaces,
the dazzling glare of the funereal lava
flies, lurid in the glooms afar,
and tinges all the landscape round.
So, ignorant of Man,
of the stretch of times he ancient deems,
of the substitution regular
of child for sire,—Nature alone
stands still in youth, or moves
along a road of so great sweep
that motionless she seems. Meanwhile,
fall kingdoms, peoples pass, and tongues
whereof no notes she takes —
but MAN, dares arrogate —
the glory, for himself, of endless days!

And Thou, slow-flowering Broom
that with thy perfumed sprays
adornest these marred lands,
Thou, too, soon must succumb
to the subterranean fires,
which visiting once again
places familiar grown,
will spread out their consuming skirts
over thy gentle shrubs:
and thou wilt bow thine innocent head,
not vainly stubborn under the load of death;
yet not ere then, shall it be bent
in futile supplication cowardly
unto thy future slayer; neither self-lifted
with insane pride, unto the stars;
nor above the waste — where not thy choice,
but fate decreed thee birth and dwelling place;
yet, wiser, yea so much less weak, than Man
in that Thou'st not believed thy feeble kind
rendered by fate, or thee imperishable!

NATURE AND ART

(Natur und Kunst)

EPILOGUE TO SONNETS

Nature and Art still shun each other's sight,
yet mate as fellows, ere one wotteth well.
My stubborn mood hath long since left me quite;
so, which most draweth me I scarce may tell.

There needs must be a strait and true endeavor;
but, the full dole once paid of life we owe,
bound mind and will as thralls of Art forever,
fiercely at heart as erst may Nature glow!

Like token marketh every high emprise.
All spirits undisciplined strove in vain to stand
where heights of pure perfection reach the skies.
Who great things would, shall hold his soul in hand.

Only self-mastered may man master be,
and law fulfilled alone can speak us free!

BALANCE

(From the Metamorphose der Thiere)

Nevertheless within, the might of the worthier creatures
findeth itself inclosed in a round of living formation:
borders no God may enlarge, and which Nature revereth.
For, thus limited, only was possible ever the perfect.

May this noble conception of might and restraint, and of
self-will

and law, and of freedom and bounds, and of order in motion,
lack and advantage,—rejoice thee; for hearken, the holy
Muse doth teach it thee thus with gentle insistence.

Higher conception no ethical thinker attaineth;
none the man of affairs, at his craft no fashioning artist.
Rulers thence, worthy of rule, the pleasure draw of their
sceptre!

Highest Creation of Nature, rejoice that thou feelest thee able
thinking, her loftiest thought to o'ertake, whereto in creating
She herself upsoared; there plant thee, and thence let thy
glances

backward sweep, make proof, and compare, and take from the
Muse's

mouth (that thou see, nor be drunken) this full truth, certain
and gracious!

A HUMAN FEELING

(Menschengefühl)

Ah, ye gods, ye mighty gods
in the wide heaven over us,
would ye grant us here on earth
stalwart mind and cheerful heart,
gladly would we leave to you,
O ye good, your heaven above!

EVEN SO

(*Ein Gleiches*)

Hovereth o'er every height —
Peace visible.
And every tree-top — light
breathings do, lull
of dreamless sleep.
Birds hush them in the brake.
Bide thee, thou too ere long shalt take
thy rest — still, deep.

THE WAYFARER

(*Der Wanderer*)

Hail, and God bless thee,
young Mother, and the little One
the son at thy breast!
Let me drop at the rock-wall here
in the elm-tree's shadow
my burden down,
and rest me beside thee.

Young Mother:

What craft can drive thee
thro' the heat of the day thus
up the dusty path hither?
Bearest wares from the town
through the country-side?
Thou smilest, stranger,
at this my question?

Wayfarer:

No wares from town have I brought.
Cool now grows the evening.
Bring me to the well-spring
whereat thou drinkest,
gracious new-wed wife!

Young Mother:

This way, up the rock-path.
Go before me! It leadeth
thro' the shrubberies thick
unto the well-spring
whereof I drink.

Wayfarer:

Tokens of ordering human hands
betwixt the bushes appear.
These stones be not of thy building,
Prodigal-handed Nature!

Young Mother:

Up further, and on!

Wayfarer:

Lo, covered with moss, an architrave!
I know thee fashioning Mind
again — thy seal in th' hewn rock deep-set.

Young Mother:

Press onward, stranger!

Wayfarer:

Inscriptions whereon I trample —
alas, illegible!
Away are ye flown
Deep-graven words,—
ye that to thousand generations
should your master's worship show.

Young Mother:

Starest thou, wondering
at this stone, stranger?
Farther up about my cot
full many stones lie.

Wayfarer:

Yonder?

Young Mother:

Close at thy left,
up thro' the thick bushes,—
here!

Wayfarer:

Ye muses and graces!

Young Mother:

This is my cottage.

Wayfarer:

Ruins of a temple!

Young Mother:

Down the slope this way
upwelleth the spring
whereof I drink.

Wayfarer:

Aglow, still hoverest thou
over thy grave-mound,
Genius; albeit on thee
hath crashed and crumbled
thy master-work, undying spirit!

Young Mother:

Stay, the while I fetch the cup
that thou mayest drink.

Wayfarer:

Ivy hath clothed about
thy godlike structure tall!
How ye yearn upward
out of the wreckage,
ye pillars twain,
and thou, too, lonesome sister,
how ye together —
mournful moss on your hallowed heads,—
in grief majestic look down
beholding the prostrate pillars
at your feet broken,—
your kith and kin!
Of the tangled bramble bushes shadowed,
rubbish and earth half hide them;
and the gaunt grass stalks over them!

Young Mother:

How he sleeps, my baby boy!
Wilt rest thee, stranger,
in our cottage?
Or wouldest rather
here in the open tarry?
Cool it is. Take thou the boy
the while I fetch thee water.
Sleep, my darling, sleep!

Wayfarer:

Sweet is thy rest!
On heavenly seas of health
afloat, tranquil he breathes!
Thou, born among the remnants
of a holy, long-gone past;
may its spirit breathe on thee!
For whom it halloweth, he,
as the gods in self-knowledge, shall thrill
with a gladness of day after day.
Unfold, thou swelling bud,
loveliest gem, adorning
white-shimmery spring,
outshine thy fellows:
then may the full fruit rise
out of thy bosom
and ripen to sunward!

Young Mother:

God bless him! Still he sleepeth?
Naught have I more than homely bread
to offer thee, with the cool spring-water.

Wayfarer:

My heartfelt thank.
How all about doth put forth bloom and leaf!
What verdure!

Young Mother:

Soon from the field
my husband home
will come. O, stay friend, stay,
And share with us the evening meal.

Wayfarer:

And here — ye dwell?

Young Mother:

Yonder among the toppled walls
my father lived to build the cottage
of tiles, and of the ruin's stones.

Here do we dwell.

To a husbandman he gave me, and breathed
his last soon in our arms

Hast slept thy fill, sweetheart?

How merry, see, and fond of play,
wee rogue!

Wayfarer:

Nature, forever budding, each
hast fashioned to the joy of life,
purveying, as mother true,
to every child a home for heritage.
High-buildeth the swallow
under the eaves, unwitting
what chiselled grace she bedaub;—
above the golden bough, her brood's
winter-abode, the cankerworm
spinneth; and thou, 'mid ruins august
of the long-gone past, O man,
for thy bare needs
buildest thy patchwork cot;—
and hast over graves — thy joy! . . .
Farewell, thou happy wife!

Young Mother:

Thou wilt not tarry?

Wayfarer:

God keep you twain,
and bless your boy.

Young Mother:

God speed thee.

Wayfarer:

Whither o'er yonder hill
will the path take me?

Young Mother:
To Cuma.

Wayfarer:
And how far thither?

Young Mother:
Three miles or more.

Wayfarer:
Farewell.
Oh, lead my steps
Nature,— the stranger's
wayfaring foot
which o'er the graves
of a hallowed long-gone age
wendeth carefree,—
to a place of safety
from northwinds sheltered,
by a poplar-copse
from the noon-sun screened.—
And, when homeward I turn
at eventide
to my hut in the last ray golden —
may such a wife there bid me welcome,
Our infant son in her arms!

CHANT OF THE SPIRITS OVER THE WATERS

(Gesang der Geister ueber den Wassern)

The soul of Man
is like unto water:
From heaven it falleth,
to heaven ariseth,
and thence to earthward
in endless round
again returneth!

When from sheer crag quick-gusheth
the flashing stream,
it breaketh in shimmer

and glister, and flitteth
to the smooth sheen rocks
below; whence softly
updrawn, as a mist-veil
forth-fluttereth, its mysteries
lisping and whispering
adown the still deep.

If rough boulders upfling them
its onrush to stem,
lo, it frotheth and roareth
from ledge to ledge weltering
to the bottomless pit;
thro' level green valleys
it dallyeth wistfully —
and the stars do number
in wide pools unwrinkled
their twinkling array.

The wind is the lusty
Lover of waters,
who the foam-crested billows
upstirreth and mingleth.

O, Life of Man's soul,
how like unto water!
O, Weird of Man's life,
how like unto wind!

HUMAN LIMITATIONS

(Die Grenzen der Menschheit)

When far-scattereth the Ancient
of days and most holy
Allfather freehanded
from billowing cloud-rack
the seeds over earth
of beneficent lightning —

I kiss me his vesture's
uttermost border,
the little child's reverent
fear in my heart.

For let not the mightiest
mete him as fellow
with beings divine.
Aloft doth man hurl him
with proud front to smite
the heavens — and lo, helpless
his foot findeth nowhere
safe stead, while the welkin
and wind with him play.

Or, with stout thew astrain,
if he rear him up, stalwart,
on the fast-founded earth
everlasting,— behold,
tho' haughty of stature,
shall to-skyward his reach be
with the gnarled oak's likened,
or the clambering vine's?

What sundereth mankind
from the Gods thus forever?
Innumerable the waves fare
on and on following —
a flow inexhaustible
before them; while us —
one surge lifteth and swalloweth,
that we sink into naught.

A petty round, close
engirdleth our life;
and the frequent generations
outstretch link in link
the chain never-ending
of human existence!

THE DIVINE

(*Das Göttliche*)

High-hearted be Man,
kindly and good.
seeing thereby only
preferrèd is He
before all beings
to mortals known.

Hail the loftier Unknown
Beings whom in awe
we forefeel! Let man be
after their likeness;
in them his ensample,
teach trust and belief!

For, without feeling
is Nature; on wicked
and good forth-shineth
the sun; ay, the mean
alike and the worthiest
behold the still beauty
of moon and of stars.

Whirlwind and flood
thunder and hail-storm
roar on their way,
and, hurtling past them,
whelm in destruction
all in their turn.

Even so, blind-gropeth
Luck 'mid the many;
now catching the curls
of the guileless youngling,
and now the bald pate
of the hoary in guilt.

Girded of laws
everduring, adamantine,
vast,—all, all
must draw to its close
their round of existence.

Man only can bring
to pass the impossible; —
'tis he who discerneth,
who deemeth and doometh;
and the vanishing moment
by his grace may endure.

To Man only is granted
boon for the worthy,
bane for the wicked;
he healeth, he saveth;
the astray and wide-strown
he atoneth in use.

And, immortals we worship
as tho' human they were;
wrought in the vast,
what in the narrower room
the worthiest doeth,
or fain would do.

Be the high-hearted man, then
both kindly and good!
fashioning unwearyed,
the Useful, the Right;
in truth so foreshadowing
yon beings we divine!

MY GODDESS

(*Meine Göttin*)

To which of the deathless
shall the highest praise be?
I contend not with any,
yet proffer my worship
to the quick-varying
ever-young and light-hearted
wondrous daughter
of Zeus, his darling
child — Phantasy!

For unto her freely
made he allotment
of all moods and whimsies,
else sacredly warded
for Him alone;
and greatly he taketh
delight in the antics
of his wayward wanton: —

Whether her listeth
with crown of red rosebuds
and white lily-sceptre
to trip it thro' valleys
abloom, and queen it
o'er summery songbirds
and butterflies, sipping
the sweet dew, beelike,
from the heart of the flowers;

Or whether her listeth,
with loose locks streaming
and look melancholy,
in the winds to fling her
over beatling crags;
Or with hues myriad-glinting
As the morn and the even
with ever new aspect
as the smiles of the moon,
to reveal her to mortals.

Wherefore, laud and thank
let us proffer the Ancient
of Days, high-exalted,
Father, who so lovely
never-fading a consort
hath accorded us, perishing
Children of men!

For unto us only
hath he lovingly plighted her
with the troth-ring of heaven,—
and straitly charged her
in good days and evil
as true-hearted helpmeet
never to forsake us.

The other poor kindreds —
offspring of the Earth,
living Mother of lives,—
roam, raven and feed,
in the gross joys sordid,
and the dull brutish anguish
of the moment's cramped
mindless existence;
bowed low by the yoke
of want and of need!

Howbeit unto us, (O
Joy!) — he hath granted
his subtlest, much-fondled
and daintiest daughter.
Come, graciously meet her
as best belovèd;
entreat her to wield
the sway of our household.

And beware lest step-dame
Wisdom, unwittingly
ruffle her sensitive
tender child's spirit.

Albeit, fellowship
lief, with her elder
soberer sister
long have I cherished:
Oh, may she not leave me
ere the last ray of life;
She, to high emprise urger,
soul-consoler — kind Hope!

THE ONE AND THE ALL

(*Eins und Alle*)

I. SELF-SURRENDER

Ay, Self to find in the boundless Vast
gladly the One were lost at last,
all chafe and coil dissolved away;
no heat of lust, wild will grim-set,
irksome demand, stern duty's threat;
self — yielded up, . . . what ecstasy!

II. ATONEMENT

Soul of the world, come thrill us through!
To wrest from the world-mind the True,
were chiefest use, then, of our strength.
Kind spirits beckon and proffer aid;
to Him who maketh all, and made,—
the foremost masters lead at length.

III. CREATION

To shape again the fashioned shape —
lest stiff, it rear and ramp agape,—
is wrought by th' onward Thrust of life.
What was not, now would come to birth
in clearbright sun, or motley earth,—
but never to rest from change and strife.

IV. EVOLUTION

Stir shall they, and press with fashioning strain,
the self-framed shape, transformed amain;
but somewhiles seem they stayed and still.

The Abiding goeth forth in all:
for the All to utter Nought must fall
if held to being with stark self-will.

MY LEGACY

(*Vermächtniss*)

I. EXISTENCE

What is — to Nought can nowise fall.
The Abiding goeth forth in all.
Thy bliss in being then have and hold;
for Being abideth ever; and laws
thy living hoard shall keep, because
the All decked him therewith of old.

II. REASON

Time out of mind, the Truth was found,—
and the high fellowship of souls close-bound.
Hold fast the eldest Truth, and thank
O, child of earth, for wisdom — One
who bade earth wing her 'round the sun,
hosting her brethren rank on rank.

III. CONSCIENCE

Now straightway to within thee turn.
That midmost spot wilt thou discern
no man of worth can dare gainsay.
Hast lack there of no rule or 'hest:
for love — self-gotten — of the best
is sun unto thy duty's day.

IV. UNDERSTANDING

In th' body's wits put childlike faith;
they cheat not ever with lie or wraith
whom the quick mind shall ward from sleep.
With keen glad eye go mark and learn;
fare safe, howso thy path may turn,
thro' a world of wealth far-strown and deep.

V. PRUDENCE

In plenty and weal, taste — and forbear,
be Heed still bidden, and well aware
 when life of life hath cheer and glee;
so shall the bygone day abide,
and time forefeel the unborn tide,
 and the brief Now — forever be.

VI. WISDOM

And hast thou got thee skill herein
thoroughly to feel, and surely ween;
 “What fruiteth well alone is true” —
behold thou long the common sway —
what dooms it deemeth on for aye —
 and fellow thee unto the few.

VII. VOCATION

And, as of yore alone and still
some work love-born of their own will
 the men of lore and songcraft 'gat,—
Thou winnest gift most fair: to fashion
high souls with thine own thought and passion!
 What call or task shall better that?

ORACULAR WORDS IN ORPHIC MANNER

(*Urworte, Orphisch*)

ΔΑΙΜΩΝ: ΔΑΜΩΝ

(*The Genius, Individuality, Innate Character*)

Yea, as the sun (what day thy life was leant
the world) did stand each planet's sphere to greet —
so throv'st thou erst, obedient to thy bent,
 by that same law which hither sped thy feet.

Such must thou be. None yet his Self outwent.
This rede sybil and seer of old repeat;
for, never time nor might could break asunder
the shape seed-hidden, whose life unfolds its wonder.

TTXII: DAS ZUFÄLLIGE

(*Luck, Environment*)

Yet Somewhat doth with gracious tread outgo
the straitest bound, and with and round us move.
Not lonely long; with fellows dost thou grow,
as oth'r well do, doth thee to do behoove.
Now for and now against thee falls the throw!
Thy life a game whose chances thou must prove.
The years, unnoted, have their ring united,
and now, the lamp doth lack the flame to light it.

EPΩΣ: LIEBE

(*Passion, Love*)

Not long it tarrieth. From heaven He flings
whereto He soar'd out of the primal Void.
Lo, hither he hovereth, on airy wings
in springtide about brow and breast light-buoyed,
feigning to flee, with subtle home-flutterings.
Then weal is woe — panic with sweetness cloyed.
Some hearts waste in the many their emotion;
the noblest to one only vow'th devotion.

ANATKH: NÖTHIGUNG

(*Necessity, Fate*)

'Tis then once more — even as the stars deem just:
condition and law and the will of all — be will . . .
for that alone in sooth we ought and must!
Each wilful wish before that Will hushed still;
what most we prize from the heart's core we thrust;
mood, will and whim the hard "thou shalt" fulfil.
So fare we, yet, in seeming freedom, yearly
more close beset than erst and hemmed more nearly.

ΕΛΠΙΣ: HOFFNUNG

(*Hope, Aspirations*)

But from such metes and bounds, such walls of brass
the stubborn gates unbolt them and unbar,
tho' ancient as the hills their rocklike mass.

A Spirit light-flitteth, untrammelled; lo, we are
from cloud-rack, reek and rain upcaught, and pass
breathless with her, given wings of her, afar.
Ye know Her well. No realm her revel may banish.
One wing-beat — and the worlds behind us vanish!



ST. FRANCIS OF THE TREES

WRITTEN FOR THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE
STEVENSON FELLOWSHIP OF SAN FRANCISCO
NOVEMBER 13, 1906

The waste of manhigh weeds—leafless and harsh—
outstretcheth dismally—a purple gloom—
into the marsh, whose inlets gleam and lure
the eye, over its ruddy reaches to the bay's
vague shimmery shine—and th' mist-bloomed farther
shore:—

when lo, with yellow fire at the grey core
enkindled, the haze, quick, hath burst aflame;
and golden glamour over sky and land
doth make what seemeth be,—what is—but seem.
Bronzed marshes, flooded inlets, lurid field
bewilder with an aspect ominous,
and the soul, unreasoning, hushed and awed, doth bow
before the enthralling mystery, and still
doth the heart stand a moment for a dread
unfeatured.

Ah, you do remember, friend,
that breathless panic, the misgivings strange
and bodings, which there rooted us awhile,
until the oaks were wading ere we knew
in fog knee-deep, to be submerged ere long—
floating at intervals over the twilight flood
the vanishing undulant outlines of their tops;
while here and there the blue-gums, fain to flee
the stealthy tide of sleep, yet rooted fast,
as in a dream, essay in vain to fling
their free forms loose!

Alas, alas, dear friend,
how soon—too soon,—the dire fulfillment came
of those premonitory fears: when rocked the earth

as insubstantial, and the tall palms bowed
hither and thither to the ground;—when walls
tottered and crashed, and th' heart leaped in affright,
and th' roar smote deaf and dumb the helpless soul,
and only the spirit dared believe and live!

But afterward ensued three days, and nights
more hideous, of anguishful dismay:—
the city,—yea, our city—ours, even ours—
the proud, luxurious, extravagant, fancy-free,
She on her sandhills betwixt ocean and bay
upbuilded—She . . . to us, upon the hitherside
safe, lay under a dense pall of reek; and high
to the very zenith, the ever-voluminous
ever-toppling, ever-steadfast cone of smoke
o'erflowed—and trailed a banner of horror grey
to southward beyond sight; whereunder, O,—
what wicked glints of yellow—bloodthirsty eyes
piercing the jungle-gloom,—whence flushes of shame
and anger over heaven. And for three nights
those awful splendors, crimson gushes, and leaps
and flares of riotous light, and glows auroral;
the while between, as in a trance, the bay
floated a magic mirror of loveliness
unreal, before the helpless throngs spellbound
along the waterside forever at gaze—
on the long fierce sunset of our city!

At last
with a sudden start we awoke (had it been hours
or æons?) to the tense activities
of nerve and heart:—relief for the shelterless,
the hungry, the bewildered, the unclean;
until the heart did sicken, and the soul
fainted within the living body of death.
We hurried hither and thither, as the ant swarms;—
ate, slept, wrought miracles, brake foolish jests—
and all the while aware, the spirit, flown far,
had left but animate automata,—
nor ever again, it seemed, should we behold

the stars in ancient wise blazon once more
the heavenly mind—the life with them beyond
things petty done and known.

But suddenly
befell—of sense no outer happening;
nay, an interior change. As from the trance
before, so from the nightmare now my soul
started; and I cried to thee:—"Enough, enough!
Come forth, friend, for a breath of the upper air,
for a calm view of land and sea. Awhile
let us this hateful desolation leave,
the enormous wreckage, th' choking dust and grime,
the swarming human foulness. Up together,
up to the mountain-top oracular
and neighbor to the stillness of the heaven.
For, lieth not the dreaming giant Bride
stretched on her bier eternal? and around—
what shrouded mourners gather them to-day?
And over her doth bend a dream, methinks,—
moon-silvered spaces of quiet? And at her feet,
moon-silvered likewise, see the ocean falleth
adreaming, the selfsame hallowed dream of peace!
Up, up Mount Tamalpais! Doth she not lie,
the wraith of our stricken city, on the bier
uplifted, shriven, for heaven to pity and bless?
Up, let us climb; she is not dead—but sleepeth;
then let us, brother, whisper as she dreams
words in her ear of comfort, loyal love
and faith undying. Up to the mountain, friend,
with me."

So spake I not? But you, incredulous,
eyed me and marveled. You—would not, nor could;
for yet the pall was lifted not from you.
Ay, you waxed scornful:—"Go, friend. As for me
I cannot leave the smoking ruins, to seek
the mountain-top of vision. Rather you
inquire of the Lord for us! Perchance He hath
a word to speak who hindered not this horror;—

maybe He is still alive—the living God. . . .
It was an accident! But you have seen,
have suffered,—and you believe yet,—you believe!
Ha, go then you unto the mountain whence
cometh our help—the abundant help we had!
And if you hear there some true word—to us
bring it back faithfully,—us in th' grime and lime—
us sons of chaos! Tell us what you saw
thence of the wider, saner, sager view—
what 'in the Mount' you heard! Farewell."

And I
intently looked at you! For I was 'ware
how, notwithstanding my denials hot,
your blasphemy proceeded—out of my heart.
So, speechless with the ache of things unsaid,
I turned—and fared upon my pilgrimage
unto the Mountain of the dreaming Bride;
and, knowing whither, recked not of the way,—
my heart with thee,—my fellow, friend, and brother,—
but of my spirit irresistibly borne on.

Ah, blessèd night, thou veilest mercifully
marshes alike and wooded valleys warm—
and the slumber-heaving waters of the bay.
The hills behind the daughter cities stand
scarce visible against the sky; and over
the stricken Mother herself the winding-sheet,
woven of gentle dusks and argentine
twilights! How sparkling—yea, and proudly glad—
hath not forthspread our Mother's wide domain,
seen from the threefold swelling height, cope-hooded,
of Grizzly, or from the sombre summit viewed,
above the old-rose foothills mottled black
with oaks—from Kawakoom, the Mount of Doom;
or else surveyed from betwixt ocean and bay
on either peak of the twain that overtop
the many-towered city of hill and vale.

"What site for to set up her throne foursquare,—
 Pride of the Far West,—She, the shining eye
 of the Republic, to the Orient turned
 with restless eager quest, unworshipful,
 daring and challenging th' unknown across
 the sundering seas;—yea, the whole vibrating
 Occident of do and dare, insolently
 aflash in the defiant sweep of the glance. Ah, true,
 this, this the chiefest wealth,—thy glory of site
 and light, can no man take from thee! And meted
 therewith, O City, of what worth be all
 thy incalculable losses? Who shall thee
 bereave (tho' many of thy children mourn
 their dead) of thy prenatal memories?
 The alien tongue, still far-off echoing
 musically? the dreamful sweetness—vague
 hauntings of anthem, and of incense? yea,
 and more, how far more precious still thy Name?
 tho' th' irony thereof do oftenest
 smite thy well-wisher:—Thy sponsor, father in God,—
 the little poor man of Assisi—Saint
 that loved his brethren tenderly—the flowers,
 the shrubs and trees,—his little brothers, too,
 beasts of the field, and fishes of the brook,
 birds of the bough and of the open sky!
 These things thou hast, thy site, thy memories
 prenatal, the ideal of thy name;
 these things, maybe not cherished as they ought
 of thee, O City, be thine inalienable
 birthright; not lost,—yea, thine,—perchance more thine
 than ever hitherto. And surely He,
 the holy Francis, will not be of all,—
 (though thine own children nourished at thy breast
 deny thee, disbelieving,) He, not now,
 whatever thy sin and shame, will thee forsake,—
 the humble, simple, wistful, tender and meek,
 who spake with radiant joy—as a little child—
 of brotherly love, sang praise of Poverty

wooded for the freedom's sake of the spirit of man
unto more fragrancy of holiness—
and more transfiguring beauty of soul!

“Nay, rather
methinks that he will visit thee, even thee,
courageous in affliction, resolute
in the hour of perished hope—O lavish still,
O confident of thy destiny! And perchance
He cometh even now. And, humbled so,
thou wilt at length receive him, and ask of Him
that he may teach thee how in very deed
thou mightest be great and noble, magnificent
and gracious! Enter, O City, and possess
thy hallowed heritage, and in thy wealth
new-got, thy pride of sumptuous power, as thou
rebuildest thee, never forget to prize
thy chieffer wealth of loveliness and charm . . .
nor thy new glow of gratitude, abashed
for the world's thought of thee in thy distress,
which draweth thee nearer to the heart of love,
O City of the Bride upon the Mount,
dreaming the East beyond this golden West;—
O City of the gentle godly man,
still bidding thee most seek thy goodliest worth
of heart and spirit!”

Thinking thoughts like these
confusedly, I clomb, nor knew fatigue,
no sense of body weighing, of the very mood
of blessed meditation lifted up
as a wisp of mist that riseth on a breath
unfelt of warmer air. And lo, recalled
to the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear:
there lay the Mother City below me spread—
her daughters three across the slumbering bay—
atwinkle, atwinkle in gladness obstinate;—
reaches of sky reflected magically—
mirage of heaven upon the mirroring land—
and more exceeding bright than starry space

of the wintery moonless vault—atwinkle, atwinkle,
 vivid, insistent—mirthful! And the moon
 cast her bewilderment of silvery haze
 over all things beside those constellations
 of earthly homes instinct with radiant life.
 Then, was my mood such, tho' I wist not why,
 I should not shrink, nor marvel—if the Mount
 were in the hallowed hush, with spirits alive
 about me. Did not Blake, singer and seer,
 graver and painter, with his dreams—awake
 hold converse? Here assuredly might one—
 yea, such as I—be visited and behold
 yearnings unknown and wisdoms of mankind
 forthbodied in symbolic images:
 Heroes and Gods that walked the earth of old,
 bulls wingèd, and desert lions sunny-maned,
 and fiery Seraphim! Ah, surely here
 might one dare meet the great of heart, the good,—
 Osiris—Baldur—Krishna—Socrates—
 Isaiah—Sakyamuni—Laötzé—
 Plato and Dante, Shakespeare, Sophocles—
 Chaucer—and Homer? Whom might one not meet,
 and dare to walk with them, and, unabashed,
 talk with them, ay—tho' face to face alone?

Then was I 'ware there stood behind me one,
 and the mystery of the unseen did sweetly send
 shudders all over. Yet I turned me not,
 lest the human music to the ear of the soul
 should faint away into the silences
 of God. But gently on my shoulder touched,
 the thrill went through me more deliriously.
 And as I turned in marvel, and breathless hope
 of rapturous surprise—my eyes met his!
 And, no whit startled did I hear myself—
 as not myself—speak witless words to him:—
 “Most holy Francis, art thou here at last?
 I knew thou couldst not tarry long—nor ever
 forget thy city.”

—"Nay, son,—sayest thou
forget my city? Never;—Yet is she
builded not on the earth."

And wrath did choke,
tho' reverence speech restrained: "Thou wouldst disown
the lost, the humbled, the destroyed? Not well
doest thou, holy man!"

"Never, son, never.
Her would I not disown had she been mine.
She hath my name received;—but hath she aught
more than the name of me, that I might call
her mine in truth, thou being witness, son?
If I should lift my voice up in her streets,
her wharves, her marts, her palaces, would She
thence answer to my calling, 'I am thine'?"

And my wrath died straightway to shame. I cried,
"Have mercy, holy man, upon us!" And he
calmly envisaged me, unearthly-still,
deep-probing with unquivering lids—wherefore
a wrath did seize me and throttle, (of the mind—
not of the heart rebellious):—"Thou, meseems
askest of Her what cannot be, nor should!
Shall—speak—a city of living men, a city
of women, a city of children, be as thou?
as thou?—and meditate in the wilds with thee
in starvèd idleness—until all hands,
all feet, all sides, as thine of old did, gape
with bleeding impress of insensate griefs—
wounds of imagination insanelly rapt
in the accidents of a tragic symbol? Nay,
thou askest too much, God wot, O holy man!
And if my mind betray me not, not meek
art thou! Meek, verily? Arrogant rather
for worths impossible, preposterous hopes,
ideals inhuman, unearthly, devilish!
accusing man of evil,—yea, and God
who made him such, and judged him very good,
foreknowing the end of childish innocence,

the lusts of the natural life,—the world's command to strive, and cry,—to slay and eat and live!—to prey, to ravage; voluptuously taste the foaming cup, for passionate ecstasy, whence the new life, the holiness of home, the fashionings imaginative of things to bodily use, and spiritual;—yea, the very ardors of godliness and communings in mystic rapture! Wherefore darest thou, for thy tense passion of delights perverse in anguish, bid that all men come to thee and follow, doing likewise? If thou be verily he that loved the natural life (and men have fabled not a saner myth than was in truth thy very self!)—if thou didst love the impulsive, unconstrained free life of bird, of beast, of fish, of flower, shrub, tree,—why ban,—outcast—the instinctive life of man? The flesh, anhungered? the longings, pieties of the innocent beast in him? quest, omen, vaunt of power, of beauty, of knowledge? Speak, O speak! Speak, holy man of God! If just thou be, ask not of this, the city of thy name, things thou well knowest impossible!

And he

replied with smile translunary that shamed in its indulgence sweet: "Son, son, perchance thou errest knowing not me. I lived as thou now livest. Was not I child of my day as thou of thine? To each generation, son, its names of God belong, its services of sense, the strengths human-divine: its faiths of spirit, hopes of heart, its disciplines, devotions! Wherefore, should I of this city say 'I know her not'—it were for cause;—that She to her own holiest vision is blind, and deaf to her own words of the Lord, spoken for her of Him, in this her day of life, and His Who ever liveth!"

"Father, forgive that I
knew thee so ill," came from my second self
the humble answer, after the brain awhile
throbbing beat out in rhythm fantastical
a silence of dismay. "The word God spake
to thee, thou didst obey, even as thereof
thy understanding gave thee interpretation; and thou
wast faithful found. What deemest thou His word
and fiat unto the city of thy name!
Forgive the wrong my thought hath done thee, and speak,
that I may go hence knowing the truth; and I
swear to utter it in thy name!" . . .

"And thine?"
"And live it—body and soul?" he seemed to ask
ironically; yet his lips did move not, and his eyes
looked far beyond all visible things. And awe
forbade more urgent questioning. For then
meseemed the mighty Mountain under us
breathed where we stood,—the pillow of the Bride,
wavering responsive to her heaving breast,
and with her dream-life pulsating. A thrill
with novel stirrings of the abysmal self,
I felt me drawn, and swallowed mystically,
into her dream,—as tho' within me dreamed,—
and close was I therein enfolded, when lo!
mists rose upbillowing,—soundless, soft, swift,—
and from the fluctuant mists there issued trees,
ghostly, yet seeming-real, that glided near,
and the steep circled, and, with their boughs awave,
sang with the voice of a wind unfelt:—

"We come,
O holy man, to thee. For thee we know,
tho' men may know thee not. We come to thee.
Thou calledst us thy brethren, and we dare
call thee our brother; and, we pray thee, choose
freely of us the better—he that truth
and right and beauty is alone—for her,
the city of thy name. Hear thou, and judge!

Discern the evil within us, and the good;
and as thy choice, even so shall be our will,—
we whom thou callest brethren equally,
who love thee all alike.”

And the holy man
smiled on them,—and his face lit up with love
and gentle pity and joy; as tho' the trees
brought solace above human fellowship,
and wafted skyey bloom and redolence
of the far Apennines,—of communings
solitary,—he alone, yet not alone,
for One was with him; and—the trees and shrubs,
the flowers, the beasts of the field that stealthily
neighbored him, all the finny folk of the brook
that leaped from crystalline cool to hear his word;
and th' birds of the air that hovered over him
in warbling skyfuls of beatitude!

“Speak, Brother Leo!” And wistfully he smiled,
correcting him:—“My Brother Live-oak, speak!”
And the tree bowed him, reverent, and spoke:—
“Behold me, holy man, for what I am,—
rugged and sturdy, stalwart, valorous,—
my wood of grain close-fibred, knotty, hard;
I root down in the depth, and reach forth free
to North, to South, to East, to West. My trunk
overleans, see, and my branches, tortuous, leap
to grapple the elusive air. And no strong wind
strippeth my solemn leafage. If my shadow
shall sombre seem or sullen:—what I have
that do I hold; for mine is mine, thine, thine—
if thou canst hold it thus, as mine I hold!
So understand I the stern law of right.
Shall I not be the emblem chosen of thee
for the city of thy name?”

And the Live-oak bowed
before the holy man and yielded room
to the Cypress. “Holy man, as the oak am I,

my brother; tho' less dark-browed frowneth he
than I. For I do hold mine own as he;
but more, do wave off with forbidding arms
the stranger. Am I not of the ancient stock
indigenous, fiercely myself? and staid and staunch
in my fierce self-hood? Wherefore not? Shall they
possess who builded not, and reap who sowed
in other furrows the seed of former hope?
Yet unto him who doth my will divine,
am not I tame and gentle, obedient
to his least wish and fantasy;—who build
a wall of dusk—about his garden of ease,
and bid the intruder avaunt? The outcast eye
can pierce no privacy I fend. The winds
blustering can pass me not. Nor may the sun
himself coerce me to surrender the shadow
of night, the cool of the morning and the dew
unwillingly! Wilt thou not then accord
to me the right to be thy city's tree?"

And when the Cypress bowed him, forward moved
the gay Acacia. "I am graceful of growth
and fragile. Yet if the March wind shall tear
my branches loose, I fling in his face new life;
yea, flaunt all over the golden blossom-balls
fragrant, bee-haunted, raining gold-dust down
in the lap of the greening earth; yea, see my bloom,
plentiful, unsuspecting of evil days,
tossed into the golden sunbeams gladsomely
of those first days after the winter rains,
when the sky is blue, the air pellucid, fresh!
Shall sunny hours be gloomy for that storms
have come and gone,—will come again and go?
Nay, glut thee radiantly with all good things
and beautiful the while the sun is lord.
Am I not, holy man, the only tree
of the happy and lavish, the city of thy name?"

And the holy man did smile:—"Gold—gold! Take all,
thy gold and buy thee—purer gold therewith,

whereof thief cannot reave thee—evermore.”
 Yet from his lips no word fell—and who it was
 spake in his stead I wot not. But straightway
 the Pepper bowed, and plead his better right:—
 “Thou dost behold me, holy man, with love!
 For delicate the showers of rain about me,—
 of fringing green; as emerald hill on hill,
 astride and elbowing one another, thrown
 carelessly forth out of the gnarly trunk,—
 and for thy gaze held forth of twisting boughs.
 Pale are my blossoms, inconspicuous—
 in clusters sociable; but mark my pungent
 berries, a-dangle in russet plenty. Am I
 aught else but languorous grace, of strength begot
 and valor? Ever fresh verdure light
 delicately abundant, with subtle odorlessness
 that no beast croppeth me careless;—without thorn
 defended of my savor of self, who am ‘I’,—
 yea, even ‘I’ only ever! Wilt not thou,
 in thy wise gentleness, award to me
 the honor of thy choice?”

And it was so
 ere th’ Pepper bowed him, eager as a child
 overmuch fondled, the Madrone brake forth
 in wayward winsome speech: “Nay, Father, hear.
 My claim thou wilt not waive—for I am he
 that speaketh with the eldest eloquence
 persuasive—the sweet language of the flesh,
 which God made chaste and clean—for pure delight;—
 whereover his hand passed lovingly with pride
 of fatherhood. The flesh—the delicate flesh,
 responsive to the vibrant world of things;
 clothing new spirit from age to age, for thought
 and novel adventure! See my foliage shields,
 shining as tho’ sunshine abode in them
 bodily. See the ruddy bark of me
 in th’ gloss of the noon-heat upcurled, to lisp
 and whisper secrets of the passionate heart!
 See, from th’ rough mantle of mine ancient trunk

escapeth—bare voluptuously breasts
 and side—frank rosy flesh of the awakened maid,
 the dryad of wanton illusive loveliness
 who fitteth forth—ah, whither? Canst thou say—
 to follow? Yet another dryad soon
 abideth in mottled shine and green-gold shade,
 thriddeth the self-same path thro' the greenwood on—
 glinting—and vanished, ere thou wottest well
 she is she, and not thyself! O innocence
 of human flesh—O glory of glad delight!
 God's way of life whereover the spirits pass
 from brutal hate unto His loving-kindness!
 Am not I of the pleasure-loving folk,
 true Tree,—the emblem of the city's joy?
 And shalt thou not prefer me unto Oak
 that liveth hard to get and hold; to Cypress
 that yieldeth kindness unto one, to irk
 with a harsh righteousness another;—nay,
 unto the Acacia, that is foolish-glad
 of lucky and lightsome fates extravagant;—
 unto the Pepper also, that doth green
 gracefully for the sole sake of graciousness,—
 but hath no deep unsearchable well of joy,
 as I,—the flesh, whence every goodliness
 of body and soul and spirit?"

And th' holy man
 looked long methinks upon the bold Madrone
 with pitying eye. "Ay, she loved much," one said,
 "because so many were her sins forgiven;
 and what she did she knew not—therefore all
 shall be forgiven her—whatso she hath done!"
 And slowly he turned his head away as tho'
 to hide a tear. And, shamed, and marvelling much,
 the glad Madrone, no longer confident,
 withdrew her (wonderful the mystery
 of godliness!), and she abode in wistful fear
 the judgment.

Whereupon the Blue-gum spake:—

“Not, holy man, indigenous am I.
From the far Austral world of barren heat
hither I came, and the Southern Cross did shine
in the still nights of my prenatal sky.
But here, see, am not I as all thy folk
of the great city?—lawless, vagabond,
my leafage hung in freakish tufts, in ragged
delicate festoons, in dense loose-jumbled
masses; or I toss them forth, at will, see, see,
frondlike, in air, to scatter to the wind
as fettered birds that flutter in vain to flee,
brought ever to a sweet captivity home?
Behold my splotchy blossoms, my haphazard
clusters of aromatic fruit, together
on the same tree,—at the same season, abide—
each bough his leisure and mood! And my trunk, see,—
the bark protective torn, dishevelled and shed
in long loose strands;—while under, grey or green,
as best shall like me! But evermore around
one only scent, mine own—wholesome? mordant?
So of our Kind each one unto himself
liveth, his precedent free and wilful law.
No straightening type shall hold of kith and kin:
himself!—himself triumphantly! Yet see,
how, when they list, my kindred range arow,
and charge in ranks unbroken the hillside steep,
and pierce the skyline, and unfurl aloft
the banner of a common victory!
Yet ever individual, confident, true
to his life only;—yet so livingly
alive, we dare the death, and cry aloud,
‘Slay us who will!’ For, if thou hew and fell
and slay, do I forthwith uprise not, yea,
and mock thee with quick growth from the sawn roots?
Am not I, holy man, for good and ill
the emblem tree for the city of thy name?”

And all the trees were glad of the insolent joy
of his own selfhood; and yet uneasily

swayed betwixt hope the Blue-gum should be chosen,
and natural fear that any be preferred
before himself. But the last of the seven trees
was speechless till the holy man made sign
the Redwood should his cause plead. Then, he spake:—

“Ill, holy man, beseemeth me to praise
myself. Yet what I am, I am; by grace
nowise of mine own will. And for His praise
who wrought me as he would, behold, I dare
display me, worshipfully with my worth
his worth extolling. From an ancient age
of th’ earth survivor, chosen of life to live,
and carry down some word of the former world
unto the world that knoweth it not; behold,
I tower, vast of girth, dizzy of upright height.
The forests olden of oak and of madrone
be as wavy wild grass at my feet. Full often
under my branches stealeth the salt sea-fog,
and, over his billowy flood, converse I hold
unbroken, with the constellations of night
primeval. Yet bulk no glory were, to grasp;
for the woodwardias, tiger-lilies, and pale
campanulas, fairer than I, by the creek do nestle
my roots among; whereas aloft I fray
in lacelike trceries of fadeless green.
And if thou for mine age no reverence know,
and hew and fell me (for, flesh of my flesh,
bone of my bone, the city of thy name—
that is no more—was builded out of me,
dead for her sake), yet rise I from the dead;
but not in the selfsame room where erst I stood
from the grey dusks before the dawn of time;
nor single, solitary, shall I rise again.
Thou knowest for me of old was it decreed,
ere were the hills thus rounded of the rains,
that from the extreme edges of the reach
should from my roots upspring, a mystic round,
and wax to majesty the red-barked sons
of me that was. And lo, no more alone

we, shall draw down the hot noon-sun to dwell
in a green-golden halo, in our midst.
The gnats go looping spirally in flight
their sheeny myriads thro' the quiet, held
sacred within our circuit. Gossamer threads
wave loose there, or net over from bough to bough,
in wind-still shimmer. But if thou at night
stand, of our outer awe inwalled, alone—
then shall we be to thee, who prayest there,
a dial of eternity; the stars
looking in one by one, and for a space
abiding, to pass on. Then shalt thou rede
the blessed law of the singleness that dieth
for the more holy round of manyhood,
to thrive, and speechless say by what we be:—
Mighty in uprightness, in delicate strength
gracious; who die not ever in our death,
but sociably a temple do uprear
with free sky overdomed—a holy ring
of a new life columnar—to ensphere
symbols of the invisible, and hold
in hush the speech, and in celestial time
th' eternities of the Unknown we know.”

Then smiled the holy man a loving smile,
and dwelt upon the Redwood fondly and long—
till Oak, Cypress, Acacia, Pepper, Madrone,
Blue-gum, and Redwood chaunted together:—“Choose,
oh, choose which one of us shall be the Tree
for emblem of the city of thy name;
and as thy choice even so shall be our will,
we whom thou calledst brethren equally,
who love thee all alike. Oh, choose,—oh, choose!”

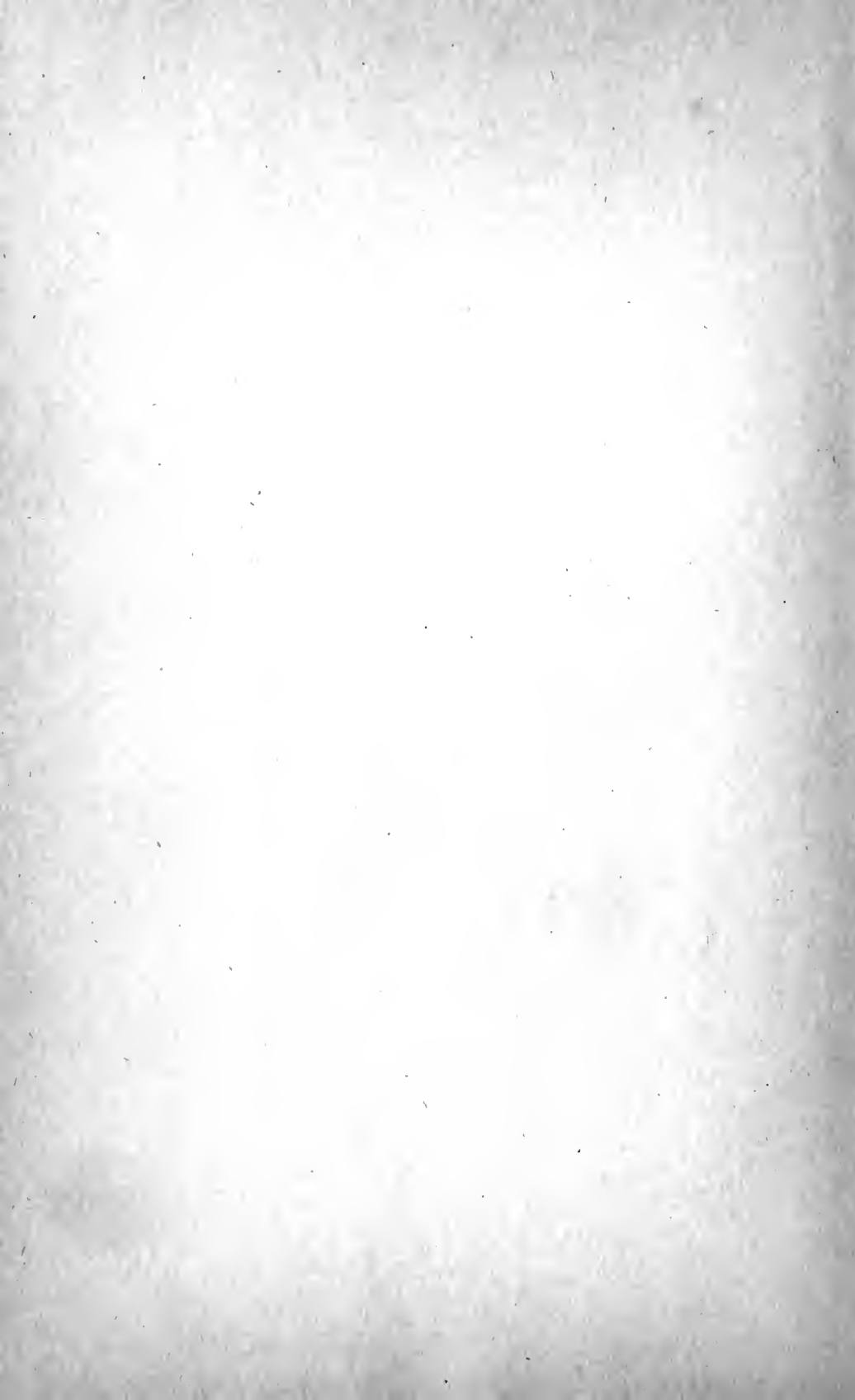
And I looked then from the seven trees away
unto the holy man. And I beheld
how he did slow withdraw once more his eyes
from vision of things unseen; and fixed his gaze
that saw, yet saw not, upon each in turn

tenderly; then wide opened he his mouth
and spake, spreading his arms abroad:—

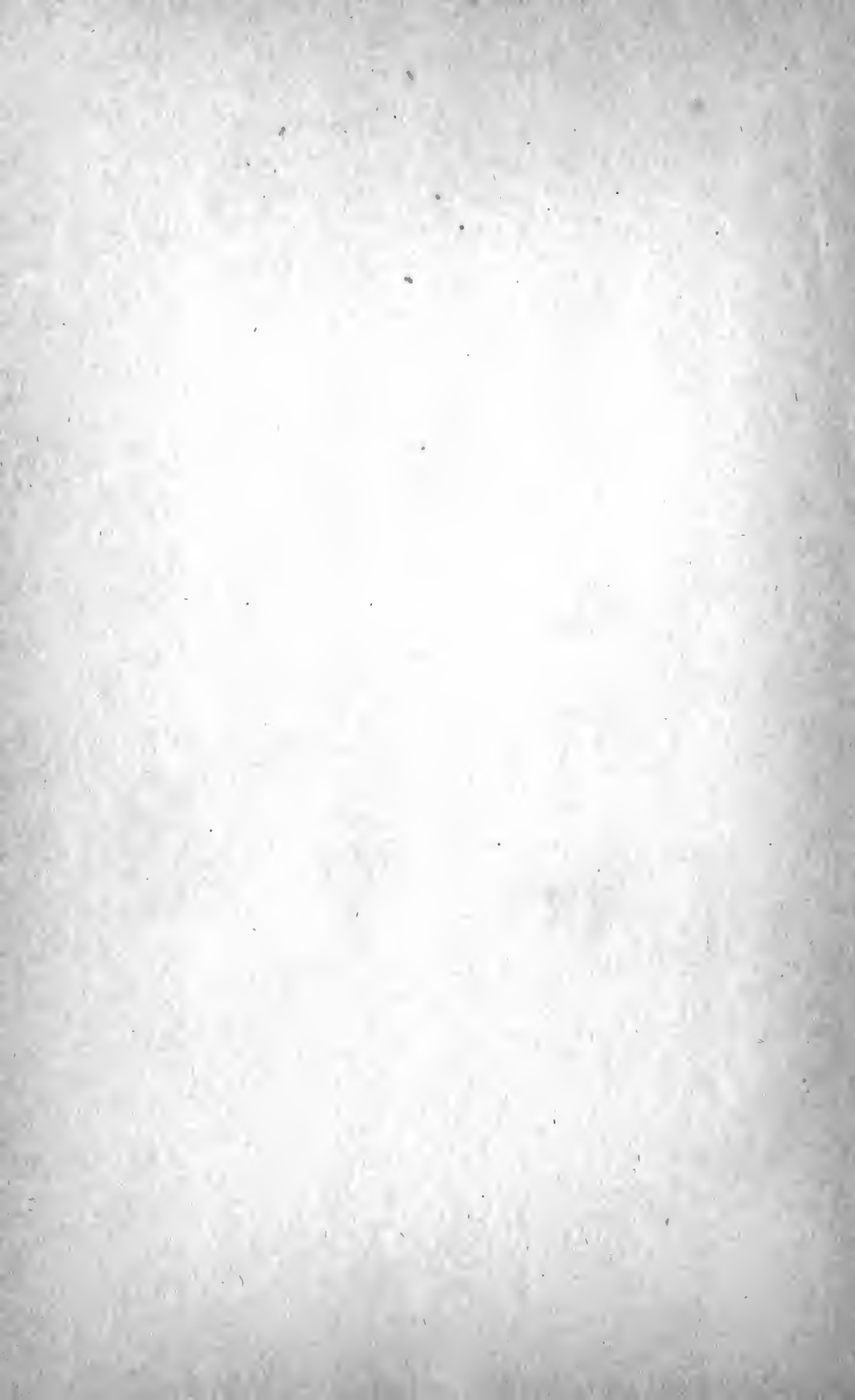
“My brothers,
together so to live in unity
is it not blessedder, as ye have proved,
better and blessedder—far blessedder
than to be chosen, tho’ chosen of God,—alone?”
And lo, he faded slowly into mist,
the holy man; and in the fading light
of the westerling moon, the trees did follow him,
their brother, and fade after him. But I,
startled, awoke and cried, “Ere thou dost quite
vanish, speak, Father, speak,—which tree!” And I
knew not his inmost mind, for never word
spake he in vanishing. Only meseems
his smile had longest dwelt and fondest
on the generous giant tree of the ages gone;
on the tree that gave himself gladly for Her,
the city that was; on the tree that riseth again
for the City that yet shall be;—that she learn
of him—the primitive worship of the truth
in nature, the feminine delicacy and grace—
nay, lightness rather fairylike, of Him,
the mightiest that upright stand, and rise
in holy rings enshrining utter peace,
and golden sun and stars,—and quivering dark
of the unseen.

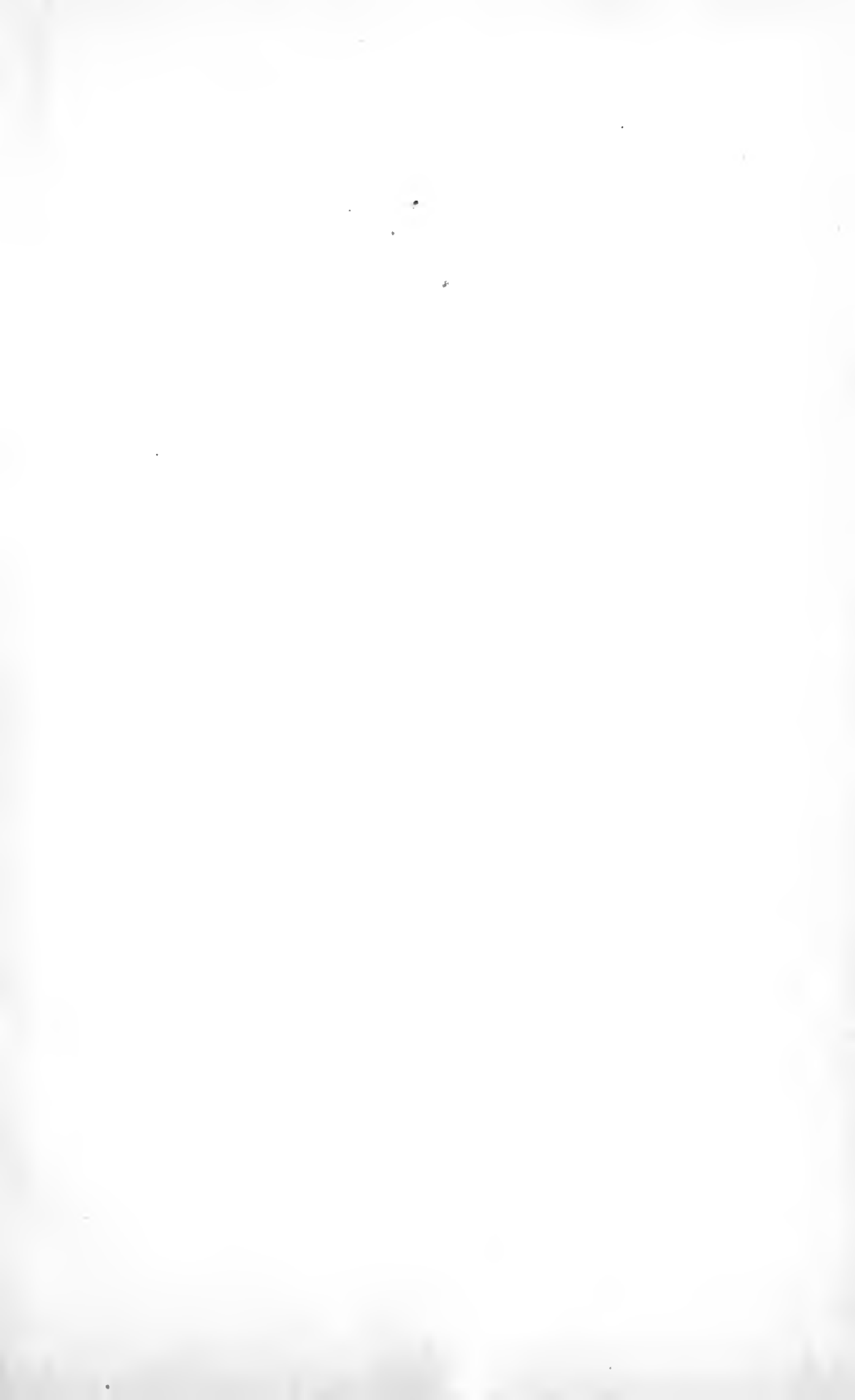
And soon, when all were passed
into the unbeheld, from the ocean a snow-soft
ghostly white fog uprose, and overpoured
slowly the mountain’s flank, and flooded in
thro’ the Golden Gate, and covered all the bay
with a relucant sea of stillness. Stars
did pale to points invisible one by one;
and a note now and then, quick, tentative,
in the brush chirruped. And the eastward masses,
voluminous, infinite, of phantom hills
and cloud, with hands of spirit uplift

slow—slowly high, the holy heavenly host
of the sun eternal, for worship of the world:
Golden effulgence spiritual amidst
the rosy flush of ever new life and love!

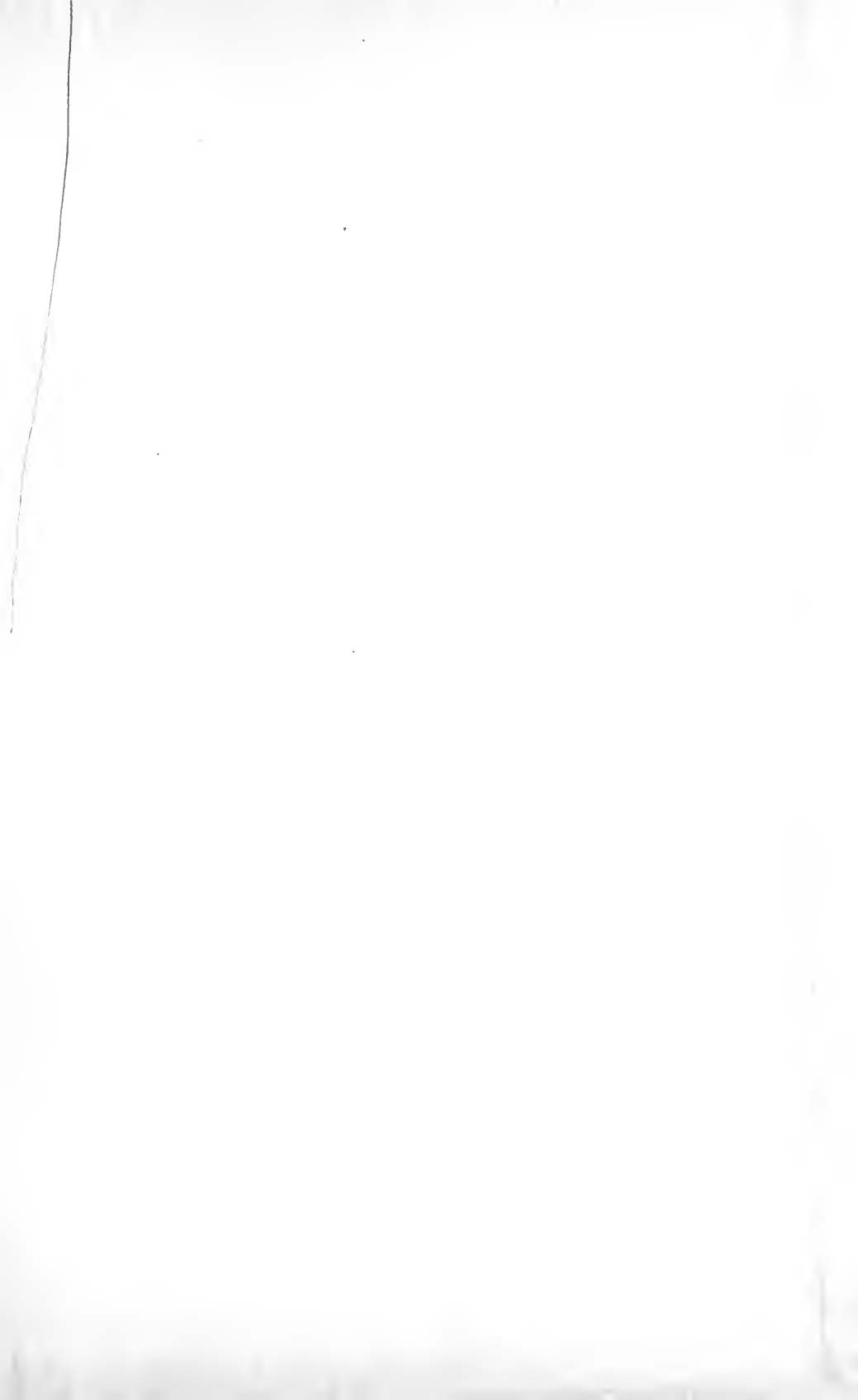








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